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MEMOIR OF THE LATE
REVEREND SAMUEL LANGTON,
Pastor of the second Church in York.

THE subject of the ensuing memoir was born in Farmington, Connecticut, October the 23d, 1723, O. S. He bore the name of his father, and was probably his eldest son, his mother's name was Elizabeth Lee. His father was a reputable farmer, the occupation to which man was at first assigned, the surest and most independent source of comfortable maintenance, a station the farthest removed from dangerous temptations, and, perhaps, best adapted to train up a family in virtuous, sober, and industrious habits. This son was destined to a public education, and was admitted into Yale College, Connecticut, September 15, 1743, O. S. graduated in 1747, and was approbated, as a candidate for the ministry, by the Hartford south association of ministers, October the 3d, 1750. A slender constitution and very poor health almost discouraged him from pursuing the business he had undertaken, and from thinking of taking upon him the charge of a people ; but journeying for his health, and visiting his classmate, the rev. ISAAC LYMAN, who was settled in the first Church at York, and who still lives, in great feebleness of body, but in uncommon strength and activity of mind, he derived so much benefit from the journey, and from the air of the place, that he consented to preach, as a candidate, in the second church in York, then vacant by the removal of their former pastor. So acceptable was his preaching that he was invited to settle with them, and was ordained to the pastoral office October 22d, 1754. He married a daughter of elder Bragdon, a respectable family in his own parish, and officer in the Church under his care, by her he had several children ; but she was taken from him in the midst of her days, and left him a sorrowful widower and anxious father, all the rest of his weary pilgrimage. Mr. Langton was in person tall, but of a very thin and slender habit, his eye was small, dark, and piercing : an undeceiving index of the mind within. For he was endowed by him from whom come down all our gifts, with a more than common share of intellectual ability. He possessed a ready, discerning, and penetrating mind. Considering the scanty provision that is, generally, made for the support of ministers, and the consequent necessity in-

terruption to their meditations, and literary pursuits; considering the difficulties that Mr. Langton had to encounter, in a slender constitution, under habitual ill health, together with afflictive and discouraging events, that befel him in the course of providence,* Mr. Langton made most laudable proficiency in the science of divinity, and stood the approved, sensible, judicious, and sound divine. He had an established, clear, and consistent view, of the great doctrine of the gospel, and was able to instruct others and confute gainsayers. His mind was so established in the truth, and his heart with grace, that he was neither caught nor shaken, with those pleasing and popular doctrines, with which some of his brethren in the ministry were impressed; nor was he carried about with the various winds of doctrine that blew upon the evening of his days. He held fast the profession of his faith, without wavering. And no one ever feared that he should hear from Mr. Langton, any thing but what would tend to make sinners wise to salvation, and build up saints in faith and holiness. The brilliance of his talents as a public speaker, was checked by the infirmities with which he labored, a painful cough often interrupting him in the course of his speaking. Great seriousness and solemnity attended the devotional exercises of this man of God; in them, he was often lengthy, and always copious, various and evangelical, adapting himself to occasions, with great pertinancy of expression. The excuse that he sometimes made for the length of his prayers was, *that he did not love to close his prayers, till he felt his heart warmed with a spirit of devotion, and* he would add, *I have such a dull, cold, and sluggish heart, that it will not be quickly stirred up and warmed.*

Mr. Langton's sermons were serious, judicious, and evangelical, the fruit of study and reflection. He did not offer to the Lord that which cost him nothing. He did not amuse his hearers, with matters of mere speculation; nor perplex their minds with doubtful disputations. He mainly insisted upon the great doctrines and duties of the gospel, that food by which souls are fed and nourished to eternal life. His stile was plain and manly, though destitute of those ornaments, in which modern days have taught preachers to dress their discourses. Every thing in the public appearance of Mr. Langton would give the idea that his main object was to persuade sinners to be reconciled to God, and that this was to be effected by convincing them of the importance of the duty, rather than by any art or address of his. Such was the tenor of this faithful man's preaching, that the fault must have been his hearers, if they went away from any of his discourses unedified.

A constitutional melancholly, cherished by his bodily infirmities and the adverse occurrences of providence, threw too deep a shade into his public and private walks, and eclipsed the lustre of that religion which *directs us to be careful for nothing, and to rejoice evermore.* He was sensible of the infirmity and lamented it, but constitutional propensities are ordinarily so strong, and so habitual in their operation, that it is impossible always to resist or conceal them. A depression of spirit was as pardonable in Mr. Langton as in almost any man whom I have known. Alone at the head of a very considerable family, which peculiarly needed the guidance, instruction and counsel of a mother; with but very moderate means of support, and those greatly diminished by the circumstances of the

* In addition to the loss of an affectionate and tender wife, and the consequent entire charge of a young family, Mr. Langton had his house consumed by fire and all his manuscripts, and most of his property consumed with it.

times: so situated as to have but few families, or individuals, with whom he or his could intimately associate, with the hope of entertainment or profit; and, what was more than these, denied that success in his ministry which the good man's heart was ardently set upon; he had little to cheer and comfort him, but the sacred pleasures of the closet, and the hope of future acceptance and glory; and it is not unlikely that his spirit of melancholly often hid those pleasures from him. He frequently lamented his own coldness and formality, and the great inattention and indifference to religious things which prevailed among the people of his charge, and, knowing from whence reviving must arise, he annually invited his neighboring brethren in the ministry, to observe with him and his people a day of fasting and prayer, to ask of the Lord the reviving influences of his spirit, and he often spoke of those days as reviving and refreshing seasons.

In the chambers of the sick and sorrowful, Mr. Langton was the diligent, sympathetic, and prudent physician and comforter. Knowing the deceit and treacherousness of the human heart, he was anxious lest any should deceive themselves through ignorance of their natural state, or a better opinion of themselves than truth would support; this faithful trait in his character sometimes occasioned his being charged with severity in his examinations, but it was the severity of a skilful chirurgeon and faithful friend who would not *heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people, slightly, crying peace, peace, when there was no peace.* His constant desire and endeavor were, to awaken the secure, to convince the unconvinced, to detect the hypocrite, to direct the inquirer, to solve and remove scruples of conscience, to comfort the feeble in mind, and render seasons of affliction profitable to the afflicted.

In his secular affairs Mr. Langton was the prudent, if not rigid oeconomist. He made it a principle, I have been informed, never to have less than a guinea on hand. He was scrupulously careful not to be in debt, and he left something to be divided among his children.

For a much longer period than either he, or his friends expected, his ministry was maintained with very little interruption. So anxious was he that his people should not be without preaching upon the Sabbath, that he often attempted to preach when prudence would have dictated that he should have been in bed. In weakness, and trembling, and much fear, he continued to preach till he had filled up the period allotted to human life, and reached *a good old age.* He preached till within two Sabbaths of his death, which was occasioned by a bleeding from the lungs. A kind providence led the writer of this memoir, to pay him his last visit, the day on which he was seized with his last bleeding. He welcomed me with his usual friendship, but said, "he had not expected to have seen any human face at that hour; expressed a full conviction that his work was done, and the hour of his dissolution was approaching, but added, that he felt calm and unalarmed, in a dependance upon that grace which he had, for so many years been preaching and recommending to others." The nature of his complaint rendered it dangerous, and indeed impossible, for him to speak much, but the whole tenor of his remarks conveyed the idea, that he thought himself upon the very verge of eternity; *just ready to be offered;* and gave the affecting and pleasing impression that he thought himself ready, for he seemed to be *giving up* the ghost, *resigning* his spirit into the hands of God, it was not *torn* from him, nor forced reluctantly from its crazy tenement, but calmly resigned to him that gave it. And we trust, through *free grace,* which was the delightful subject

of his contemplation here, it is gone to reap the rewards of a faithful servant in the kingdom of glory. His funeral sermon was preached, by the rev. JOSEPH BUCKMINSTER of Portsmouth, N. H. from Genesis xxv, chap. 8th verse. *Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died, in a good old age, an old man, and full of days, and was gathered to his people.*

A—Z.

IF the foregoing memoir should fall into the hands of any of the surviving children, they are exhorted to remember the many pious counsels and admonitions they received from the lips of their venerable parents, the many prayers that were put up for them, with much sighing and tears, both in the family and closet; and how reasonably it is expected that such children should follow the faith and purity of their parent, that he, though departed from this world, may live in his children, and they may prepare to live with him in the region of immortal life and blessedness.

If any of the church, or parish, who for many years were the charge of this worthy servant of Christ, should meet with this tribute of respect to the memory of their late pastor, they are earnestly exhorted to recollect and consider *how they heard, and received, and repent, for verily a prophet of the* Lord *was among them, whose hearts desire, and prayer to God for them doubtless was that they might be saved. by coming to a knowledge of the truth as it is in* JESUS. And friendly fidelity induces the writer, to exhort them to *great searchings of heart* uuder their present divided and alienated state in their religious affairs, that they may be led to see whether God is not correcting them, for their neglect of his gospel, and their inattention to the ministry of his faithful servant. To have *occasion* to have lights removed from the candlesticks before they are burnt out, demands serious inquiry and examination; but while the candlesticks remain there in hope: provoke not God, brethren, to take this away. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another. Follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

A. Z.

A Pastoral Letter,

ADDRESSED TO THOSE, WHO HAVE FLED FROM THEIR HABITATIONS, ON ACCOUNT OF THE DESOLATING SICKNESS WITH WHICH GOD HAS VISITED US.

My dear friends

YOUR affectionate pastor desires to acknowledge, with gratitude to God, the esteem and respect with which you have treated him, since he has been in the service of your souls; and will ever retain a grateful remembrance of the pleasure with which you have welcomed him to your houses, and the candor with which you have received his public ministrations. But the awful visitation of Providence that is upon us, having interrupted those friendly interviews, and removed you from his public instructions. Suffer him to address you by way of letter, and to endeavor to assist you in improving this awakening dispensation. The evil that is in the city is, most manifestly, from the Lord, of evils in general we can find some secondary, instrumental, cause or causes at which the less thoughtful mind, is apt to rest without rising to the first cause; but

of this calamity, among the multiplied conjectures of its secondary cause there is no one, that for any time arrests, much less, satisfies the mind, that we are compelled to acknowledge that it *is from the Lord. His voice, directly crieth to the city, and commands us to hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it.* It deserves reflection, that the pestilential fever has not only arrested our city, which has been celebrated for the salubrity of its air, and the healthiness of its situation, but it first arrested and has been principally confined to that part of the town, which has been esteemed the most healthy; circumstances calculated to humble human confidence and presumption, and to teach us that *God only makes our mountain to stand strong*, and that *safety is of the Lord.* When you first removed from your habitations, it was feared, you did it with too much precipitancy; the result of too little confidence in God; but he has remarkably preserved your lives and health in your retreat, while he has levied heavy contribution on your neighbors and friends that have tarried behind. May his merciful dispensation towards you suitably affect your hearts, while they bleed for the chasms made in the circle of your acquaintance. The interruption of your usual business, and the safety of your retreat, have afforded you special opportunity for intellectual and moral exercises, and it is hoped a due proportion of your time has been devoted to reading, meditation, and prayer; and that deep, serious, consideration has been awakened in your minds in this day of adversity. It has been impossible that you should not be exercised with your own situation, and that you should not be grieved for the afflicted and poor people that you had left behind; where could you go, with your anxieties and griefs, but to the mercy seat of a God hearing prayer; and to the compassionate bosom of a sympathising Savior. Could you help saying while the idea of your fair convenient and elegant houses, left desolate without an inhabitant, rose to your view, how vain a thing is it, to pride ourselves in our habitations, to boast of the elegance of our furniture, or the ornaments that surround us? Would not the query sometimes arise, whether you had not been too anxious about these things, and too little concerned to prepare in your souls, *an habitation for God through the spirit?* Had you devoted your houses to God? Had you built for him an altar in them? And did you offer to the Lord your daily sacrifice? If so the savor of your religion will be remembered, if not, can you wonder that your houses should cast you out; where the author of your mercies was not acknowledgsd? While on the Sabbath of the Lord you have found yourselves precluded from your usual place of worship, and have thought of your vacant seats, have you not inquired how you had improved your Sabbaths, in the days of your prosperity? and how you had received the messages of the most high. Your pastor has endeavored, according to the ability that God has given him, to preach to you the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to persuade you not to receive the grace of God in vain; but has he not had reason to fear, that he has labored very much in vain; and that to most of his hearers he has not been a savor of life unto life? May we all be humbled. And if ever we should meet again in the sanctuary of the Lord, may the ministration of the gospel be with power, and much assurance, and joy in the holy ghost. My dear people, God has mercifully protected you in your flight from the pestilence, and smiled upon your endeavors to escape the fever. But have we not reason to think, if we do not hear his voice in this chastening; and repent, and reform, and return unto him, that he has other

judgments in store severer and more distressing. If, we misimprove the present day of God's anger, and remain unhumbled and unreformed, though God may suspend his awful visitation ; he will probably return with a heavier rod, and visit us with calamity from which there will be no fleeing. Or, if he should not, yet my dear people, we must come to death, we must be carried to the house appointed for all living, a few more revolving seasons will bring some of us there according to the ordinary period of life, nor will it appear very long e'er the youngest among us accomplish as hirelings their day. Death is an event we can none of us escape, or resist, and what safety or security will there be for us then ? There is, there will be none but in Jesus Christ, in a union with him, who has conquered death and triumphed over the grave ; and promised peace and safety to all that believe in him ! Suffer then the affectionate exhortation, from your sincere friend, and be intreated to believe in Christ ; give a cordial acceptance to the gospel, cast away from you, evil hearts of unbelief, listen to the overtures of peace, and walk worthy of the Lord, to all well pleasing. A. Z.

Family Order and Government,

OR, THE PIOUS AND EXEMPLARY HOUSEHOLD.

NUM. IV.

EXEMPLARIUS, the truly religious householder, whose amiable character has been delineated, in the preceding numbers, more especially as it respects family devotions, and the government and instruction of children, is further to be noticed and respected, as to his conduct with regard to *servants*. He expresses a real concern for the welfare of *all* who dwell under his roof. His servants, as well as his children, are objects of his benevolent and pious attention. They share in his instructions, and in his prayers, and are taught by his counsels, his commands, and his good example, to keep the way of the Lord.

This exemplary master is careful, in the first place, not to admit into his family or employment, any who are openly immoral and vicious ; or, if admitted, not to continue them in it long, especially if he find them refractory, and unwilling to be instructed, reproved and reformed.

In order to his governing servants aright, and their being the more faithful in his service, he is sensible of the necessity of their having some good degree of *reverence* for his authority. This, therefore, he endeavors to establish in them, and secure to himself, not, indeed, by assuming any unjust power, or undue authority, nor by accustoming himself to a proud arbitrary, or distant carriage ; but by a propriety and dignity of conduct, resulting from a just sense of his station and duty. He is, likewise, sensible of the importance of their entertaining a cordial *affection* to him : and, therefore, he labors to secure this to himself, not by any unbecoming familiarity, or mean submission, much less by insincere pretences, or promises ; but by a humane, candid, generous, friendly behavior towards them.

He takes care to give order and arrangement to the business required of them, directing them what, and how, to do. His requirements are reasonable and just. No services are exacted of them, to which he thinks them unequal, nor burdens laid upon them which there is reason to suppose their strength or health will not bear. In short, he is disposed to do to them, in all respects, as he would

be done by, were there an exchange of circumstances. He is ready to make all proper allowance for common failures and miscarriages; and to overlook the inadvertencies and involuntary faults, to which all are liable, and with which, they at times are evidently chargeable. But, when they do wrong allowedly, and especially when found to be addicted to any evil courses, he feels himself bound in duty to reprove and rebuke them : and this he does, with a greater or less degree of sharpness, as time and circumstances require. He will not suffer sin upon them, but bears a pointed testimony against it, and endeavors to reform them. He shows his approbation of those things that are good and commendable in them ; and, in particular, gives them encouragement in their usual labors, by approving of what they do well, by allowing them a proper and sufficient support, and by conferring upon them seasonable and just rewards for their services.

More especially, EXEMPLARIUS views it of importance to encourage and promote religion and morality in his domestics. He instructs them in the principles, and he labors to form and establish in them the habits of virtue. He teaches them the difference between good and evil ; the obligations they are under to do to others as they would have others do to them ; teaches them the amiableness of virtue, and the deformity of vice ; the advantages resulting from the former, and the miseries consequent on the latter ; and, withal, encourages the use of those books among them, especially the sacred scriptures, which serve to disseminate the principles, and inculcate the obligations of morality. He endeavors, as he has opportunity, to instruct them in the nature, and to excite them to the practice, of the christian religion, that *pure and undefiled religion*, which infinitely concerns the personal interest of all, of servants as well as masters, and which, in the highest degree affects their happiness, both here and hereafter. Separate, therefore, from a consideration of the benefit that may justly be expected to accrue to his own private and domestic concerns, from his servants fearing God and being truly religious and faithful ; he earnestly wishes, for their own sake, that their spiritual and religious interests may be promoted. He does therefore, by seasonable counsels and admonitions, by a regular attention to family duties, by examples of piety and religion, and by encouraging in them an observation of the Lord's day, and attendance on public worship, endeavor to advance these, their best interests.

It is with deep regret, that EXEMPLARIUS notices the great and prevailing inattention of many masters and mistresses, with respect to the moral instruction and religious improvement of their servants ; and particularly, that, on the holy sabbath, a day so expressly set apart to be observed and improved by all in attending to the concerns of the soul and futurity, servants should be so much neglected as to religious instruction, or such restraints laid upon them, or business required of them, as deprive them in great measure of opportunities to attend, either in public or private, to their weightiest concerns, the things that belong to their everlasting peace.

The soul of the servant he views to be as precious as that of the master, and the salvation of the soul, of as much importance to the lowest class of people as it respects themselves, as it is to the highest order of men.

He views, therefore, with heartfelt grief, the extravagant practices of many families, on the sabbath ; particularly that worldly matters are so much attended to, and that such large portions of the day are allowed or required to be taken up in preparation for entertainments, and in a round of cere-

monies and menial services as that many, especially of the class of servants, are much straitened, as to time, if not wholly deprived of opportunities of going up to the house of God, to hear the instructions of his word, and those divine admonitions and reproofs, which to all are needful while in this state of ignorance, imperfection and sin.—He cannot but lament, that any heads of families should be so lost to a sense of duty, as to require so much holy time to be spent and so much service done in order, as it seems, to gratify their fancy, to please their taste, and pamper their bodies, though it be at the expence, in adegree, of the souls and salvation of their fellow candidates for eternity!

EXEMPLARIUS sensibly feels it to be *his* duty, to study such order and economy, with regard to time and necessary works on the Sabbath, as to afford an opportunity for all in his family to pay some attention to the concerns of religion, to reading, meditation and prayer in private, and for as many as may be convenient, to attend upon the public instructions and institutions of God's house. He would by no means keep any from public worship, merely to promote his own worldly interest, or to be accommodated with splendid entertainments for himself or friends, or to afford any undue gratification to those natural wishes and inclinations, which may have respect, either to appetite, to ceremony, or distinction. Far would he be from sacrificing the best interests of even the meanest of his fellow mortals, to his own private and temporal views, especially to any corporal or sensual indulgences. And he cannot but express the grief he feels, on account of the pernicious customs and practices of many, who are heads of families; and who are therefore bound by various sacred ties, to command their children and household after them, that they may keep the way of the Lord. And accordingly, he would thus expostulate, and say, "O ye who are *masters according to the flesh*; consider, not only that you yourselves have a *master in heaven*, who is no respecter of persons, and to whom you are accountable; but, consider, and be careful to fulfil the obligations you are under to those who are your servants. They are placed under you, not that you should lord it over their consciences, or over their whole time. You are to consider their just rights, the privileges to which they are entitled. They have souls to be saved, or lost, as well as others, accordingly as they improve or neglect time and talents, accordingly as they obey or disobey the gospel of salvation. You should therefore allow them suitable opportunities for public instruction and private devotion; and should occasionally advise and counsel them yourselves, and encourage them to the duties and things of religion. But, need any arguments be used to enforce a discharge of your duty to them? Can it be, that you have no thought or regard to their welfare; no concern for their best good; no compassion for their precious and immortal souls? Have you no wish that they may escape the wrath to come, and be happy with God forever? Do you not consider their spiritual as well as temporal interests, in a sense entrusted to your care? Perhaps Providence sent them into your families for purposes of the most salutary nature. If you are true believers, christian masters, perhaps, under the direction of heaven, they left another house and come to yours, as Onesimus did to Paul, that you might *receive them forever*. How great will be your joy, if, in the noblest sense, they should be born under your roof? If in their dying moments they should have it to tell you, that their admission to your family was the most favorable event of their life! And how unutterable will be the pleasure you will feel on the great day of ac-

count, to hear it reported by the lips of the blessed Jesus, your Master and Judge, that you had been the instrument of saving this and that soul from the miseries of hell, and forming them for the happiness and glory of heaven!"

PAULINUS.

EXTRACT FROM DR. WATTS' MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS; ON JOB XXIII. 3.

O that I knew where I might find Him!

AMONG all the various kinds and orders of God's intellectual creation, there is not one that uses this language besides a mourning saint in this lower world. As for all other spirits, whether dwelling in flesh or not, their wishes are expressed in a very different manner; nor do they seek and long to find out an absent God.

If we ascend up to heaven, and enquire there what are the wishes of those blessed spirits, we shall find that their enjoyments are so glorious, and their satisfactions rise so high in the immediate presence of God amongst them, that they have nothing of this nature to wish for, they know that their God is with them, and all their wish is, what they are assured to enjoy, That this God will be with them forever.

If we descend to the regions of hell, where God reigns in vengeance, we shall hear those unhappy spirits groaning out many a faithful wish, "O that I knew where I might avoid him, that I might get out of his sight, out of his notice and reach forever! I feel his dreadful presence, and O that it were possible for me to be utterly absent from him, and to find a place where God is not!"

If we take the wings of the morning, and fly to the utmost parts of the eastern or western world, we shall find the language of those ignorant heathen, "O that I knew where I might find food, and plenty, and all sensual delights!" but they send not a wish after the great God, though he has been so many ages absent from them and their fathers. He is unknown to them, and they have no desires working in them after an unknown God.

If we tarry at home, and survey the bulk of mankind around us, the voice of their wishes sounds much the same as that of the Heathen world, "O that I knew where I might find trade and merchandize, riches and honors, corn, wine and oil, the necessaries or the superfluous luxuries of life!" But God is not in all their thoughts. If they frequent the temples, and attend the seasons of worship, they are well enough satisfied with outward forms without the sight of God in them. There is no natural man that with a sincere longing of soul cries out, "O that I knew where I might find him."

As for the children of God, that live in the light of their Father's countenance, they walk with him daily and hourly, they behold him near them by the eye of faith, and they feel the sweet influences of his gracious presence; their highest ambition and thier dearest wishes are, "O that he might abide forever with me, and keep me forever near to himself!"

The words of this scripture therefore can only be the language of a saint on earth in distress and darkness; when God who was wont to visit him with divine communication, and to meet him in his addresses to the throne of grace, has withdrawn himself for a sea-

son, and left the soul to grapple with many difficulties alone.

This was the case of that holy man, whose sorrows and complaints have furnished out almost a whole book of scripture, and supplied the saints in all succeeding ages with the forms and speeches of pious mourning. It is the voice of a sacred impatience that Job here utters, "O that I knew where I might find him," and by a plain paraphrase we may learn both the meaning and the reason of such language, and be taught by his example to lament after an absent God.

Let us suppose the saint therefore pouring out his soul in such sort of expressions as these, in which I shall not entirely confine myself to the darkness of the patriarchal dispensation under which Job lived, but indulge the language of the new testament, and personate a mourning christian.

"Time was when I had a God near me, and upon every new distress and difficulty I made him my present refuge; I was wont to call upon him in an hour of darkness, and he shone upon my path with a divine light. He has often taught me to read my duty in his providences, or in his word, or by some secret hints of his own spirit, even while I have been kneeling at the throne of his grace: but now I find not my usual signs and tokens; my guide and my counsellor is withdrawn, "O that I knew where I might find him!"

"He was once my kind assistant in every duty, and my support under every burden: I have found the grace of my Lord sufficient for me in my sharpest conflicts; his strength has appeared in my weakness. When my spiritual enemies have beset me round, he has scattered them before me, or subdued them under me; and being held up by his everlasting arms, I have stood my ground, and borne up my head under the weight of heavy sorrows. But now I am attacked on all sides, my soul wrestels hard with sins and temptations, and I find no assistance, no victory: I sink under my present sorrow: for my God, my strength, and my comforter, is absent, and afar off. "O that I knew where I might find him!"

"My God was wont to deal with me as a compassionate friend when satan accused, he has justified. He has shown me the all-sufficient sacrifice of his son, and that spotless righteousness of his which has answered all the demands of his own holy law, and cancelled all the charges of guilt that the devil, or my own conscience, could bring against me. He has taught me by faith to put my soul under the sprinklings of this sacred blood, and to wrap around me the robe of this divine righteousness; he himself has arrayed me in garments of salvation: but now the army of my sins rises up before me, and overwhelms my spirit with many terrors; Satan the accuser urges on the charge, and my Savior and his righteousness are as it were hidden from me. "O that I knew where I might find him!"

"Many a censure have I borne from men, and had my reputation assaulted and my good name blackened with many a scandal. But when man reproached me, God has undertaken my cause, and made my righteousness shine as the light, and my innocence as the noon day; I could then pour out my soul before him, tell him all my sorrows in flowing language, and feel sweet relief. But now, alas! troubles and reproaches are multiplied upon me, and he does not seem to take my part; my spirit is bound and shut up, and I am cut off from that free converse, that humble holy intimacy which I once enjoyed with my God; I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. Will he not help me to pray? Will he not hear my groans and requests? Hath God forgotten to be gracious?

Yet I would seek his face still, and "O that I knew where I might find him !"

"Often have I seen him in his own ordinances in the place of public worship; I have seen his power and his glory in the sanctuary: I have found him in secret corners, and my meditation of him has been exceedingly sweet. In dark retirements he has smiled on my soul, and has often given me reviving light. I have found him in his works, and I have had a fairer sight of him in his word; I can name the places, the pleasant places in my bible, and say, "I have seen the face of my God here :" but now the bible itself is like a sealed book, or like a strange language which I cannot understand; I hear not the voice of my God speaking to me there; I go forward to his promises and read what he will do for his people, but I perceive him not; backward to his past providences, or to my own experiences, and review what he has done, but there is a darkness too: I turn to my left hand amongst his works of nature, but I do not see him; I seek him on my right hand amongst his works of grace, but still he hides himself that I cannot behold him. "I wander in the night and inquire after him, I watch for him more than they that watch for the morning; O that I knew where I might find him !"

And it is no wonder that I am so impatient under the painful sense of his present distance from me, and so importunate for his return: for I have known the dreadful case of utter distance from him in a state of nature and sin, and have tasted something of the pleasure of being brought nigh by grace: and now I dread every thing that looks like the old distance, that estrangement; I would fain renew those divine pleasures of a returning, and reconciled God: "O that I new where I might find him !"

"Besides, I bethink myself and say, "what shall I do without a God !" for I find all creatures utterly insufficient to relieve and help me; and I have known something of God's all-sufficiency; he has been my helper in six troubles and in seven; he is my only hope; when creatures stand aloof from me, and each of them say, "there is no help in me," whether should I go then but to my God? "O that I knew where I might find him !"

"I have been so much used to live upon him, and found his divine aids and influences so necessary to my life and my peace, that I sink and die at his absence. I feel within myself a sort of heavenly instinct that I want his presence, and cannot live without him. I know he stands in no need of me, for he gives to all his creatures life and breath, and being; but I need his counsels and his comforts, his strength and his love: my soul is touched with such a divine influence, that it cannot rest while God withdraws, as the needle trembles and hunts after the hidden loadstone. If my God retire and hide himself, he will forgive a creature that loves him so well as to follow hard after him without ceasing, and is impatient and restless till he search him out; "O that I knew where I might find him !"

"Though God is pleased to depart from me for a season, yet I cannot let go all my hope; he hides himself from my soul, yet I dare not think him an enemy, but only a concealed friend: if I could get near him even to his seat, I know I should find it a mercy-seat, though perhaps judgment may sit there too. It is a throne of grace, says a christian, because *Jesus* is there with the blood of atonement; and having such an high priest over the house of God, and such a new and living way of access by the blood of Christ, I will seek after him and address myself to him; I will confess mine iniquities before him, and be sorry for

my sins, which may have beclouded or eclipsed my heavenly sun, and hid his face from me; I fear I have grieved his blessed spirit, and provoked him to withdraw his kind influences of light, strength and comfort; nor will I cease grieving for his absence until he return again.

"Come, O eternal spirit, come and visit my poor dark and disconsolate soul; come and awaken all my powers to follow hard after my Father and my God! Come, invigorate my faith, and lead me to the Mediator, the blessed *Jesus*; come open to me the promises, and let me into the covenant of his unchangeable love, ratified and sealed with blood. If ever I find my God again, it is there, I know, I must find him: Christ is the only way to the Father. It is by the interest of his Son I shall get near to him, even to his seat; then will I pour out all my woes and my wants in his sight, I will order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. Will he plead against me with his great power? No, but he will put strength in me, and assist and suffer me to prevail with him.

"Then, when I have found him whom my soul loveth, I will hold him fast and not let him go. I will charge all the powers and passions of my nature not to yield to one sinful practice, nor provoke him to depart; for he is my everlasting and my almighty Friend.

"Then, though I should have a thousand enemies set themselves against me, I would not be afraid; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for I have found my God, and my God is with me."

FOR THE MAGAZINE.

Extract from the private Diary of a CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

Num. IV.

THE God who governs the world is the constant patron of piety and virtue. Righteousness is a characteristic which invariably marks the administration of his providential government. "The "sceptre of his kingdom is a right "sceptre," sometimes indeed; "Clouds and darkness are round "about him;" yet "righteousness and judgment are always, the habitation of his throne."

I have long been confirmed in the belief that God loves his church, and his children, too tenderly, to lay upon them any burdens, or expose them to any distresses, which are not indispensable to their profit. It is, "if need be," that they, at any time, are placed in circumstances of distress. It is right for them, to "endure "chastizing, that they may be "made partakers of his holiness." It is fit, they should have "the "sentence of death in themselves, "that they might trust in the liv-"ing God," and that, "his "strength may be made perfect "in their weakness."

In all the dispensations of divine providence, which immediately respect my own person, I desire in the most deliberate, and solemn manner to acknowledge the righteousness of God. I would particularly, with lively sentiments of reverence, and adoration, recognize the hand of God in the affliction with which, I have been recently exercised. In the perfectly righteous administration of the divine government, I have now been placed in a state of confinement, by a painful and threatening fever. But it has pleased the Lord of my life, to raise me up once more, so far as to be able to sit, awhile, in my chair. It is now my duty to set up my EBENEZER; to inscribe upon it in capitals indelable, "hitherto hath the

Lord helped ;" and to give him the glory of his merciful deeds on the occasion.

Upon the best, the most serious recollection I am able to make, I feel myself constrained solemnly to record the following remarks. In the *first* place I observe that the affliction with which I have been exercised, was sent in the close of a season, in which God had called me to, and carried me through, more than ordinary fatigues, in visiting the sick and the dying ; amongst my own people, and in the vicinity ; in attending funerals, in journeys, in preaching, and administering ordinances, at home and abroad, in many of which seasons and labors I think I have enjoyed much of God in his dear Son.

In the *second* place, I desire with sentiments of adoration and gratitude, to recognize the divine goodness in so remarkably upholding me through all my labors, notwithstanding my bodily strength and health have been, formerly, habitually delicate ; in opening and smoothing that part of my duty ; and so kindly preserving my person, in my going out and coming in, both by night and by day, and that this disease was not permitted to invade, until the sickness amongst my people was in some degree checked and the calls for special labor and attention had become less frequent and urgent than before.

In the *third* place, I remark with humility and thankfulness, that the gracious things which, I trust, the Lord was pleased to do for me at the last communion season had not yet vanished, but still kept my mind in near and sensible converse with spiritual objects ; and made this life appear no otherwise valuable, than as it might subserve God's glory, and the Redeemer's cause.

I desire forever to praise my Lord, who, in the whole course of my confinement, preserved my reason, though, alas, so much slighted and abused, discovered to me his justice, and righteousness, in every part of my affliction, and never once suffered me to murmur, though Satan was often reckoning up my complaints before me, and saying, is not *this* hard ? Is not *that* severe ? yet praised be the name of the Lord, HE supported my soul ; HE led me to see that all his dealings are perfectly right ; and constrained me to exclaim, "O thou who art the Lord of my life, give me strength to bear what thou layest on, and then lay on what thou wilt !"

When my disorder was coming on, and rising to its crisis, my sickness became a teacher ; and admonished me to consider my latter end. Accordingly I was drawn into a solemn, and close contemplation of my state as a feeble dying creature. I felt myself in the hand of God ; my life at his disposal. What he had ordained for me I knew not. Whether it was his pleasure that I should ever arise, in health, from the bed on which I had been brought to lie down, I could not tell. However, the following things were certain, I know that the Almighty Arbiter of life and death could easily make the disease with which I was afflicted, the mean for terminating all my connections with the world, and hurrying me to the judgment seat of God. Or if I should not die suddenly, I knew that the fever by which I was confined, had, in several instances, terminated in a decline ; that I had reason to apprehend a kind of family taint, or predisposition to pulmonary consumption ; and that my symptoms, all along, were strongly marked with indications of that disease.

My thoughts, usually so busy, were not idle now, in mustering up arguments for desiring life, viz. the state of the Church ; my relation to it ; its necessities and its dangers ; my own plans for future usefulness ; the case of my family, &c. &c. But the God to

whom I desire to submit the whole disposal of me, in every case, graciously lifted me above all my trials. HE made me see that if any good is done to the Church it must be all the Lord's own doing; that he can never be at a loss for an instrument to effect his own designs; and that the changing of his tools does not in the least embarrass his work.

With equal clearness I was led to see that I could never do any good unless the Lord were pleased to work by me; and that if I really wanted to serve and glorify him to any purpose, it was best to depart and to be with Christ, for that heaven is the only place where I can expect to answer that end.

And as to my family, I had every encouragement to trust them in the hand of God. The gracious things which the Lord has recently done for my beloved wife, in giving her, as I trust, an heart-felt acquaintance with the renewing and sanctifying virtue of the Redeemer's spirit, invite me to expect for her, every needed support and comfort. Should she be called to close down my dying eyes, and commit my body to the grave, she shall not be left entirely desolate. God will be her friend and patron. HE will say thy maker is thy husband. And in that saying her widowed heart shall feel all that nature can ask for, amidst its various pains. And as to my children, the large experience I already had of God's goodness to them, could not admit a doubt of his providing for them such an education as should bring them up for God; and that was all I wanted for them.

Never, I think, did I more clearly see the vanity of all beneath the gracious Lord and Savior of men; nor the absurdity of trusting my soul with him and yet refusing to trust my family in his hands. Upon the most deliberate and solemn consideration of the whole case, I think my heart was as fully resigned to the will of my Lord as ever in my life. I felt unspeakable pleasure in being altogether in his hands and at his disposal. I could with cheerfulness say, "not my will O Lord, not my will, but thine be done."

Against this entire surrender of myself to the disposing providence of God, in life, or death, a train of strong objections passed my mind, and I was pressed with such enquiries as these. What if I be not fit to die? What if my religion should be found to be wholly ideal? What if all my supposed evidence of a state of grace, should prove to be the work of fancy only?

Though I was closely tried on this all-important subject, yet the Lord was pleased to silence all objections on that account. The adorable God of grace discovered to me the safety of the souls that are interested in Christ. He shewed me his glory in the face of Jesus. Never did the person of Christ appear to me more lovely or glorious. My heart and my flesh cried out for him. He was my all in all. I saw in him all I wanted, all I needed, or desired. His office-fulness contained all my treasure. My heart sold all for that pearl. And, O the riches of his grace, even to the chief of sinners! O the freeness of his mercy to such a guilty, undeserving rebel! Amazing grace, and love beyond degree! The subject overwhelms my mind!- it strikes me dumb! Angels speak my thoughts.

I was carried once and again to close self-examination; but blessed be my rock, HE did not once, I think, suffer me to distrust his mercy; or to doubt either his ability or his willingness to save even to the uttermost. I waited for his salvation, and my chief concern was that Christ might be glorified in this world, especially in me.

When I found that my fever had formed a favorable crisis, and there were signs of my recovering my health again, my heart protested against returning into life with all my former ills about me.

My cry was for riddance of my dross. I saw what and where my special wants and dangers were. I could not trust my resolutions nor myself. My heart I think renounced both; and gave up the keeping of me altogether to my Lord and master; and there I desire to leave the matter.

Yet that this affliction might not be unfruitful; I resolved to endeavor as far as divine influence might lead, and incline, animate and strengthen for it, to act more constantly and zealously for Christ in all my ways, to be more in going out of myself for all things to him, to live more upon him as well as to him, to aim at his glory in all things, to live more spiritually and heavenly, in my habitual temper and conduct. Humbly depending on the illuminating influences of the divine spirit, I resolve to seek a more impressive sense of my own vileness, and therefore to be more humble, more watchful against all my sins; especially that lawless insensibility, and intireness of heart in lawful enjoyments, that pride and vain glory, that selfishness and self confidence, those wanderings of heart, that formality, ostentation, &c. &c. which easily beset me.

Imploring the aids of all-sufficient grace, in the discharge of every duty, I resolve to husband my time more faithfully, especially the early hours of the morning, to be more diligent and engaged in study and writing, in conversation and preaching, in the devotions of the family and the closet, in self-examination and in secret covenantings with God in Christ.

Relying altogether on the promised help of the spirit of Christ, I moreover resolve to be more constant and painful in the government and instruction of my family, more careful to do good to my intimate friends, more tender and kind to those who may censure or condemn me, more charitable and benevolent to my open enemies; more earnest in doing them good; and more watchful against evil inclinations against them. And to endeavor more vigorously to promote the interests of the gospel amongst the people of my immediate charge, and in the Church and world in general.

And in as much as I know I am not sufficient for keeping any one of these resolves, nor for doing any one good thing; I now desire, anew, as on the bended knees of my sinful body, to take God the Father in Christ, for my God and Father, that I may ever be his child. And God the Son, immanuel, God with us, for my husband, my life, my love, my righteousness, my wisdom, my strength my sanctification and redemption, that I may be his spouse, my heart his throne, my all unreservedly his. And God the Holy Spirit for the author of all my light, life, grace, holiness and comfort, that I may be his temple, instrument and servant forever. The covenant of grace I renewedly take as my chosen plan of life, the law of God as my rule, and himself my eternal portion, my all in all.

With like solemnity and in the same adoring attitude, I do also renewedly dedicate and devote unreservedly to him, myself, my body with all its members and organs, my soul with all its powers and faculties, my tongue, my voice, my senses and life, my time, talents, strength, health, name and my all forever, to be disposed of by him, and at his holy pleasure only, and to be employed for him, and for his glory, and in his service, as my sole business and chief happiness worlds without end.

AMEN.

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF THE

Christian Religion.

" IN dwelling on the numerous " arguments in favor of the Chris- " tian Religion, I have been struck " with one view of the subject, " which appears to me to afford a " conclusive, evidence of its divine " authority. Having often advan- " ced it among many unsettled and " sceptical minds, and perceived " its favorable influence upon them, " I now feel a wish to give it a " greater circulation. Almost the " whole train of deistical writers " concur in admitting the exis- " tence of such a person as JESUS " CHRIST, and that he was the " author of the excellent system " of religion imputed to him in the " New-Testament. They in gen- " eral reject only his miracles, and " such other events, as were con- " nected with the employment of " a supernatural power. Now " let us for a moment leave these " miracles out of the question, and " see whether there cannot be " found positive proof, independent " of them, arising out of the very " nature of the subject, that Jesus " was what christians have repre- " sented him."

" Every deist must affix to him " some *character*, either good or " bad. Indeed on this head, I be- " lieve deistical writers may be di- " vided into two classes ; the first " representing him to have been " an honest and benevolent, but a " simple and misguided man ; and " the second, " a designing impos- " tor." " I do not recollect any " author, who has not, in sub- " stance, applied one of these char- " acters to him.

" Let us now examine these two " characters separately, and ascer- " tain their degree of *consistency*. First, " he was an *honest* and *be- " nevolent*, but a *simple* and *mis- " guided* man." Does the history " of human nature afford instances " of *honest* and *benevolent* men " telling *untruths* ? For, when " Jesus told us he was the son of " God, he must according to the " deist, though an *honest* man, " have told a falsehood." I be- lieve " it would be difficult to find " an *honest* man, who would dare " to personate the Son of God ! " Is not the pretence the extreme " of absurdity ? " No," answer " they, " he was also *simple* and " *misguided*. He truly did believe " himself to be the Son of God." " But did a *simple* and *misguided* " man ever teach or produce a " system of morality so eminently " calculated to meliorate the con- " dition of man, and which deists " themselves do not deny, has far " exceeded all the boasted wisdom " of Grecian and Roman philoso- " phy, a system which renders the " lectures of a Socrates and a Se- " neca, the productions of a school " boy in the comparison, we must " hear no more of his being a sim- " ple and *misguided* Man !

" Now to the character given " him by the second class of deists; " He was a designing impostor." " But here are still greater diffi- " ties. Did a *designing impostor*, " and necessarily a bad man, ever " devote and even sacrifice his " life in the cause of holiness and " virtue ? Would a designing im- " postor teach his followers to ex- " pect nothing but scorn and per- " secution through life ; and incul- " cate among them sentiments re- " markably *opposite* to their own " vicious inclinations ? Would a " *designing impostor*, when his " countrymen wished to hail him " as their KING, have rejected " the offer of *power* and *aggran- " dizement*, and prefer rather a " life of poverty and distress ? " Common sense indignantly an- " swers, no !"

"What then must Jesus have "been? Why, the personage he "has represented himself to be, "the SON of GOD. Being such "a personage, we shall have no "difficulty in believing him CAPA- "BLE of performing the miracles "ascribed to him; and we shall "have no difficulty also in giving "our assent to the truth of the Old "Testament, inasmuch as he of- "ten quoted it as authentic; for "who shall question a fact support- "ed by the authority of the great "SAVIOR of MANKIND?

A LETTER FROM AN EMINENT DIVINE, IN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION,

Did the apostles suppose the Day of Judgment to be nigh at hand, at the time when they wrote the Epistles contained in the New Testament?

Reverend and Dear Sir,

THOUGH I have little reason to think I shall be able to offer any thing that will be more likely to remove the scruple mentioned in your letter, than what has occurred to your own thoughts on the subject, or has been suggested to you by those whom you have consulted, yet I am willing at your request to inform you of the reasons why I do not think there is any thing in the writings of the apostles which implies, or gives us sufficient reason to conclude, that the coming of Christ and end of the world was believed by them to be so near as that they and their contemporaries might expect to live till this great event should take place. But, on the contrary, that their writings afford positive evidence that they had not, and could not with reason have such an expectation.

It has been objected by infidels that the apostles expected and predicted the coming of Christ as so near, that those, who were living when they wrote, would then be found alive. But this prediction has been confuted by the long space of time which has been since, and yet the world is not come to an end, but seems as likely to continue longer as ever.

Now if there be no certain or sufficient evidence that the apostles expected or foretold, that the coming of Christ and end of the world would be so soon as the objection supposes, then the objection must fall for want of a foundation. It is sufficiently answered, if it be shewn that the objected fact wants sufficient proof.

But though it is not incumbent on a respondent, according to the rules of fair disputation, to adduce positive proof that the apostles did not expect the coming of Christ to be so near as the objection supposes, and pretends, yet I think it may also be made to appear with a good degree of evidence, that the apostles did not expect the end of the world was so near, but that hundreds or thousands of years might revolve before that period.

There are indeed several passages in the apostles' writings, which taken singly and separately from other passages in their writings, seem at first view to countenance the opinion that they expected and predicted the coming of Christ as much nearer than we find it was when they wrote. You have quoted several of these passages; and other similar passages might be added to them. But I think we shall find that they afford no solid foundation for *such an opinion*, if they be compared and taken in connexion with other parts of the scriptures, since *they may be fair-*

ly interpreted so that the near approach of the end of the world shall not appear to be affirmed, implied, or intimated; yea that they *must be so interpreted*, in order that the consistency of the sacred writers with themselves may be preserved.

The words of the apostle, Heb. x. 37. yet a little while and he who shall come, will come, and will not tarry," quoted by you, with which we may properly join those words in verse xxv. "Exhort one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching." These words are supposed by good expositors, Capellus, Dr. Hammond, and Mr. Joseph Mede, to be a prophecy of the destruction of the Jewish nation, which was very near when this epistle was written. They may also be understood of Christ's coming in his providence to call his servants hence by death, as is commonly observed by expositors. Those words Rev. ii, 10. "Be thou faithful *unto death*," seem to be parallel with v. 25. "That which ye have hold fast *till I come*." If the words refer also ultimately to Christ's coming at the end of the world, yet the intervening time, when compared with that endless duration for which we are designed, may well be accounted and represented as very short. This is the answer which Peter gives to the objection of those scoffers who should arise in the latter days, who should pretend, as infidels do at this day, that the promise or prediction of Christ's coming appeared to be vain, since all things have so long continued, notwithstanding, and still continue as they were from the beginning. To this the apostle replies, that with the Lord, in his account, "a thousand years are as one day," II. Peter iii. 8. Moses also speaks to the same effect, Psalm xc. 4. "A thousand years are in thy sight but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." To one who has an endless duration in his view, hundreds or thousands of years may probably be represented as but a little while indeed, even as a moment. Accordingly we find that *in the prophetic style* events are represented as near at hand, when they were not to be accomplished in hundreds of years. In Deut. xxxii, which contains a prophecy of those judgments which would be inflicted on the Israelites to their ruin, it is said, "the day of their calamity *is at hand*, and the things that shall come upon them *make haste*," v. 35. Yet it was hundreds of years before this destruction came upon them; and the fulfilling of this prophecy seems to extend to the present time. The first coming of Christ was foretold by Malachi more than four hundred years before his birth, in these words, "the Lord whom ye seek *shall suddenly come to his Temple*," Mal. iii, 1. And Haggai, also, foretelling the same event, says, "yet once *a little while* [it was more than 500 years] and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the desire of all nations shall come," Haggai ii, 6. And whatever some may suspect of the apostle, yet it is not to be supposed Christ was mistaken when foretelling his second coming, Matthew xxiv. 29. he says, "*immediately, or soon* after the tribulation of those days, of which he had spoken before, shall the sun be darkened, &c." And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, &c. And though he had, in the Revelations which John received in the Isle of Patmos, revealed to him a long series of events, which would take up perhaps thousands of years, before his coming at the end of the world; yet he also says repeatedly, "*Behold I come quickly.*" And chap. i. 3. John says, "*the time was at hand*," when those prophecies would be fulfilled. Isaiah, forteling the fall of the

Babylonian empire near 200 years before that event, says, Isaiah xiii. "Howl ye, for *the day of the Lord is at hand*, it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty." Paul also says, that our light afflictions *endure but for a moment*, II. Cor. iv. 17. Though the ysometimes endure more than three score years and ten, yet this is but a moment compared with that everlasting state which is to follow.

Those expressions, occurring in the writings of the apostles, which speak of the coming of Christ as near, or at hand, may, I think, fairly and warrantably be understood, as we must understand similar expressions *in the prophetic style*. We ought not hence to conclude, that they expected to live, or that any who were then alive would live, till Christ's second coming. The words you quote from 1. Peter, iv. 7. "The end of all things is at hand," are explained by Joseph Mede, Dr. Hammond and Dr. Lightfoot, as a prediction of the abolishing of the Jewish Commonwealth and hierarchy. The original text may also be rendered: "The end of *all* is at hand;" that is, death, which Solomon terms *the end of all men*, is near. The next words are, "be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer," which are a proper inference from the words thus understood. If they are taken to mean the near approach of the end of the world, the observations on the foregoing text may be here applied with equal propriety. You quote also the words of James, chap. v. 8, 9. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The Judge standeth at the door." After what has been already observed, there seems to be no peculiar difficulty in the words. Besides I see not but that it may be properly said that a future event *draws nigh*, or is *drawing nearer* to us continually, how long soever it may be before it shall come. That may be *drawing nigh*, which has not yet *come near*. Those words in John, ii. 18. "We know that it is the last time," are also quoted. I conceive it is not a strained interpretation, but a fair and probable exposition of those words, if we take them as they are commonly understood, viz. that it was then, when the apostle wrote, the time when the Jewish dispensation and polity in church and state was near its end; or rather, since this epistle is supposed to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem, that it was then the last age of the world, the last dispensation of the church. But, this does not imply but that this last period or dispensation might continue for thousand of years; especially since, I think, there is good evidence that John did not expect the world would come to an end in many years. The words of Paul, Rom. xiii. 12, have also been objected: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand;" that is, as Piscator explains the words, the night of heathenish darkness and ignorance is past with christians, the day of gospel light is come, let us therefore walk honestly as in the day. The passage thus explained makes no difficulty.

But you seem to find more difficulty how to understand several passages in Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, in which he undeniably treats of the day of judgment, and seems to intimate apprehensions of its near approach, or, at least, that it might come soon. And, you think the sense of several passages quoted by you will be very clear, and the apostle's meaning more evident, on supposition that he considered this day as near at hand, than it otherwise would be." But if we have good reason not to admit that supposition, we shall have good reason not to admit any interpretation of *those words*, which would imply such a supposition, however clear and obvious it might seem at first view; if *they* may fairly be explained otherwise, so as to avoid the inconvenience of involving an

unreasonable supposition. Whether there is not good evidence that the apostles did not expect the day of judgment so soon as some of their expressions, might seem, and have been thought by some to intimate, will be considered afterwards. But, I think, that they who believe the apostles were divinely inspired in writing their epistles, (and the arguments in favor of their inspiration must be owned by all to be of very considerable weight,) these must be unwilling to admit the supposition that they inserted in them any opinions of their own which now appear to be erroneous. This would be such an objection to the divine inspiration and infallibility of their writings as, I think, could not be easily answered. Cardinal Barronius was indeed of opinion that Paul expected the day of judgment was very near, though it now appears that he was mistaken. Grotius also was of the same opinion; and that in representing the coming of Christ as at hand he spoke not by divine inspiration, but only delivered his own private conjecture. But the words of the apostle do not countenance, indeed I think do not allow such an opinion. For he appears fully persuaded that he spoke not by conjecture, but by inspiration. 1. Thessalonians, iv. 15. "This we say unto you *by the word of the Lord*, that we which are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." It seems much more reasonable to understand the apostle's words in a sense agreable to truth, though it should seem at first not the most obvious, than to take them in a sense which implies a manifest untruth. This is thought but reasonable in interpreting writings, which pretend not to inspiration or infallibility. It is certain that the true meaning of scriptural expressions is often quite different from what such expressions, taken singly, seem at first view most obviously to signify. It seems almost needless to give instances of this. When Christ said, standing in the temple, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," the Jews mistook his meaning by taking his words in their most obvious sense. So did Nicodemus in the same way misunderstand him when he told him that "he must be born again." When he said that Lazarus slept, but he would go and wake him, he spake of his death, but his disciples, taking his words in their obvious sense, thought he spoke of taking rest in sleep, &c. &c.

But I think there is little need of insisting on these remarks. For I think what Paul has said in this epistle may be fairly, and without any violent straining of his words, so explained as that nothing will appear to be implied or intimated in them contrary to truth.

In chap. i. 9, 10. the apostle says, "ye turned from dumb idols to serve the living God, and to *wait for his Son from heaven.*" Our *waiting* for the coming of the Lord does suppose that we expect and hope that he will certainly come in his own time. We are to be looking, and waiting with patience for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our God and Savior. Though he tarry long, we are to wait patiently for him. This does not imply an expectation of living until his coming. The fathers waited for the first coming of Christ. Jacob, when he was dying said, "I have waited for thy salvation," that is, for the promised Savior, as his words are commonly understood." We have no reason to think, that he expected, as Simeon did, not to see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. Paul says that christians wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, that is, the resurrection of their bodies; but they could not expect a resurrection or deliverance from the bondage of corruption before death.

1. Thessalonians ii, 19. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of re-

joicing; are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" I grant these words refer to the second coming of Christ, but I see nothing in them which implies or intimates that the apostle expected this event soon to take place. As Christ had prayed for all whom the Father gave to him, that they might be with him, to behold his glory, and enter into his joy; the apostle here expresses his hope and joy in expectation that his converts would be with Christ at his coming, and would then be a crown of rejoicing to him. It was the confident expectation of Christ's coming; and that they would be with him and be a crown of rejoicing to the apostle, not the nearness hereof, that is here expressed.

Chap. iii. 13. "To the end, he (the Lord) may establish your heart unblamable in holiness at his coming." The meaning of this text seems to be expressed a little obscurely in our translation. It may, I think, be more plainly rendered thus. "To the end the Lord may establish your heart, that ye may be unblamable in holiness at his coming." Then the church will be presented, not having *spot* or *wrinkle* or any such thing, but be *holy* and *without blemish*. So Piscator, Grotius, and other critics understand the words. But, whether the apostle expected this coming of Christ would be soon, I find here no intimation.

Chap. iv. 15, 17. "This we say unto you, not by conjecture, but by *the word of the Lord*, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them that are asleep. Then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." You say, it is possible the apostle may speak in the name of the christian community, who should live many hundreds or thousands of years after his time. But this is not the most natural construction of the words. They are of such a nature as lead one to suppose the writer thought it not improbable that himself, and the Christians then living, might be alive and on the earth at the day of judgment.

Now, admitting that the words, taken singly, and detached from other parts of the scriptures, may seem at first to express this sentiment, yet there may be sufficient reasons to conclude that this was not the intendment of the writer. What reasons there are for this conclusion will be considered, after observing that there seems to be nothing in the expressions themselves here used, which renders it improbable that the apostle here speaks *in the name of christians* who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, whenever it shall be, even though he had no expectation that he, or those he wrote to, would then be alive. "We christians, says he, that is, those who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall be caught up, &c." To me there appears nothing very unnatural or strained in this interpretation of the words—similar modes of expression are found in sacred and profane writings. When Jacob said to his sons, "gather yourselves together that I may tell you what *shall befal you in the latter days*;" he did not mean to intimate any expectation that his sons would live till his predictions should be fulfilled. Nor had he such an expectation when he said to Joseph," God will visit you and *bring you again into the land of your fathers*." Joseph also said to the children of Israel, "*God shall surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones hence*;" yet it is not probable that any of those, to whom he said this, lived to return out of Egypt. When Moses said to the Israelites in the wilderness, "when all these things are *come unto thee, the blessing and the curse*, &c," Deut. xxx. 1, he did not mean to intimate

that any of that generation would live till all those things would come upon them. The Psalmist speaking of their passing through the sea on dry land, says, Psalm lxvi. 6. "*there did we rejoice in him.*" Florus too the Roman historian, says, Scipio who lived several hundred years before he wrote, made Spain a tributary province *to us.* Many more similar examples might be produced of things that have been said by persons as personifying those who lived before they were born, or who were not expected to live till long after they should be dead. If any one should say, "*we* shall probably be a great nation an hundred years hence," none would understand this as implying or intimating an expectation that the present generation would then be alive.

You think it difficult to account for the apostles exhorting Christians who were mourning the death of pious friends, to comfort themselves with those words which he had spoken concerning the resurrection, without suggesting a thought of their present happiness; unless he either thought the resurrection was near at hand, or that their happiness would not commence till that time. But if this be a difficulty, it will not be removed if we should suppose that the apostle expected the dead would be raised within twenty or thirty years. Whether he expected this in a few years, or not till many years should be past, still their being at present in a state of happiness in the mean time would be matter of comfort, and so might seem fit to be mentioned. If it is not common for christians at this day to comfort mourners from the consideration of the *nearness* of the resurrection, neither do I find that the apostle endeavored to comfort them from the consideration of its *nearness*, but from its being certain and glorious. And I conceive it is very usual for christians to comfort those who are mourning for the pious dead, by reminding them of the certainty and blessedness of the resurrection of the saints. This is almost the only topic of consolation we find in the burial service of the church of England. The happiness of separate spirits is mentioned but once, and that very slightly. This is indeed usually, and very properly mentioned for the consolation of mourners. And if it should be asked, why it was not mentioned by the apostle, it might perhaps be sufficient to say, that he might not think it needful to mention all the topics of consolation. Why this was not mentioned we may not be able to determine, nor is it incumbent upon us. But a conjecture may be offered, and you may take it for what it is worth.

It was, as Mr. Clark says, very generally believed by the heathens, however they differed in their modes of religion, that souls of good men would survive their bodies, and be happy after death, but they had no expectation that the dead bodies would be restored to life. The christian doctrine of the resurrection was thought most incredible. Christians also believed that the souls of good men would be happy while separate from the body. *This was a principle common to believers and unbelievers.* But the resurrection of the saints to a blessed immortal life is a doctrine peculiar to christians; it is brought to light by the gospel. And though there is, I think, good evidence from the scriptures that their souls while separate from their bodies are happy, yet this being a principle so generally received in the world, with more or less confidence by those who had any religion, the sacred writers, speak more sparingly of it. But they are very copious, full, and express in asserting the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Christ. The apostle, therefore, in the passage we have been considering, might not think there was need of saying any thing expressly of the happiness of separate souls, but tak-

ing it for granted as a received principle, scarce denied by any, except the atheistical and irreligious philosophers, he carries the view of christians to the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the saints, when the gracious purposes of God in the redemption, the salvation and glorification of his elect will be fully executed.

The last passage quoted by you is, 1. Thessalonians, v. 23. "I pray God your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." If the apostle had prayed that his converts might be sanctified wholly, and that the whole spirit, soul and body might be preserved blameless unto death, I conceive there would little or no difficulty have been apprehended here; unless it were, to understand how a body is preserved blameless. Now the body as united to the soul is a *part of the person*; so, though in itself, considered as separate from the soul, it is incapable of laudable or blameable qualities, yet when considered as a part of the person, it is denominated blameless, when its members are not instruments of sin, fulfilling the lusts of a carnal mind. Now if the spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto death, they will remain so to the coming of the Lord.

I have hitherto stood wholly on the defensive, and have considered all those passages you have mentioned which might seem to imply that the apostles expected Christ's coming in the age when they wrote. And I think it appears, that though taken singly, they may seem to suggest that the apostles expected Christ would come so soon, yet this is no conclusive proof, and indeed but a slight presumption that this was their meaning, since there are not only a thousand instances where it is certain that the most obvious meaning of expressions, singly and separately taken, is not their true intended meaning, but also the expressions which seem most to countenance the supposition of their having such expectations, may fairly without unwarranted or hard straining be taken in a different sense, since similar expressions occur in the holy scriptures and other writers which are, and must be understood in the same manner. I grant that the most obvious meaning of expressions taken singly and by themselves is to be preferred, if no sufficient reasons appear for understanding them otherwise. *I will therefore now consider, whether we have not positive reasons sufficient to satisfy us, that the apostles did not expect the coming of Christ in the age in which they lived, nor till many years afterward.*

And, my first reason is, that if they had such an expectation, and meant to signify and express the same in their writings, it will be such an objection against their being divinely inspired, as I see not how it can be answered. For Paul says positively, that what he has said upon this subject was not any private opinion or conjecture of his, but that he *spoke it by the word of the Lord.* If he believed, as some have understood his words, that Christ would come to judgment, while himself and those he wrote to were living, and if this was the intended meaning of his words, then what he *professed to deliver by the word of the Lord was false.* Near eighteen hundred years are fulfilled since that time, and Christ is not yet come. But surely no christian will endure such a thought as that *the apostle delivered a notorious falshood as the word of the Lord.* And though infidels may be willing enough to think so, yet the arguments we have in proof of his divine inspiration *are so many proofs that the true meaning of his words is agreeable to truth.* And these are certainly of much greater weight, than any thing that can be offered to prove that a meaning evidently contrary to known fact was intended by him, when his words may fairly, according to the known

usage of writers and speakers, be interpreted and understood otherwise, as has been shewn.

That Paul did not think it in any degree probable that he should live to the coming of Christ, appears from several passages in his writings. He expresses his desire to *depart and be with Christ*; to be *absent from the body and present with the Lord;* which implies or intimates that he did not expect to be with Christ until he should depart, and be absent from the body. He says also, that "*the time of his departure was at hand.*" And as he had hope toward God that there would be a resurrection of the dead, so he says that "forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to them that are before, he pressed on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, being made conformable to his death, by bearing the cross for his sake, "*if by any means he might attain to the resurrection of the dead*" But he could not hope for a happy resurrection without first dying. Finally, in his second epistle to the Thessalonians, II chapter, he signifies that there was no reason for their being shaken in mind, or troubled by any thing in his former epistle, which some through mistake, thought, suggested that *the day of Christ was at hand.* For he adds, "that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." But before he was revealed, *that which did let or hinder his rise must first be taken away.* I. Timothy iv. a very remarkable passage is delivered *as a divinely inspired prophecy.* "*The spirit speaketh expressly,*" is the introduction. And how exactly it describes the Papal antichristianism, Bishop Newton, and others have clearly shewn. This I take to be a conclusive proof that the apostle wrote by divine inspiration; and therefore that his true intended meaning in what he *professedly spake by the word of the Lord* in his former epistle, was not a mistaken conjecture of his own, but agreeable to truth, and he did not mean to affirm or intimate that the coming of Christ was nearer than we have since found. Besides, the several particulars he has mentioned could not with any probability be expected to be fulfilled in a short time. If we consider the purity, piety, and zeal of christians in the apostolic age, it must appear very improbable that such an apostacy, as is here foretold, should take place in that age. Again, *that which hindered* the rise and tyrannic power of the man of sin, *must be taken away*, before that wicked one be revealed in his true character. By this is understood *the civil power of the Roman empire*, which was a check upon the advances of anti-christ to that prodigious height of power to which the bishop of Rome aspired, and rose rapidly after *the fall of the Roman empire.* Now though the apostle probably might not know how long time the fulfilment of this prophecy would require, yet the events foretold, the general apostacy of profest christians, the fall of the Roman empire, the rise and advance of the man of sin, the continuance of his impious and tyrannical reign, with his consequent fall and consumption; these events, I say, were of such a nature, the changes predicted of such magnitude and extent, as must in reason be supposed would take up probably some hundreds of years; at least it would seem altogether incredible that all these things should come to pass, during the life of any who were then living.

We have then, I think, sufficient evidence that *Paul did not believe* the coming of the Lord to be at hand, and those who thought this was suggested in his former epistle to the Thessalonians *wholly mistook his intended meaning*, as his own words plainly import.

It is also certain that Peter, whose words you have also quo-

ted, did not expect to live unto the coming of Christ. For Christ had signified to him *by what death he should glorify God*, John xxi. 19. and in II. Epistle i. 14, 15. he says, that he wrote to those to whom this epistle was directed," to stir them up by putting them in remembrance, *knowing that he must shortly put off this his tabernacle:* That so they might be able, *after his decease*, to have these things always in remembrance.

John, who said, "*we know that it is the last time*," had a revelation made to him at the Isle of Patmos, of such a series of events as would require many hundreds, perhaps thousands of years; not to mention the millenium, and consequent events which were to precede the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and last judgment. We may certainly conclude that he had no expectation of the second coming of Christ, until all those things should be fulfilled. The one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetical days, that is, years, that the tyranny of anti-christ was to continue after its rise, must have prevented all expectation that the end of the world would be before that period would be past.

It may also be mentioned (though I do not think that great stress is to be laid on an expression in a parable which may seem incidental,) that in the parable of the talents it is said, "*after a long time* the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them." Might not this expression be intended by Christ as an intimation to his disciples, that though he had said before that the coming of the Son of Man would be soon after the tribulation of those days he had foretold, yet this was to be understood, so as that it would be *a long time* according to the common estimation and account of men?

I have now, dear sir, given you my thoughts on the question which, you say, has for some time labored in your mind; and have, I think, noticed every thing in your letter which seemed material. I have great confidence in your *candor*, that you will take in good part what is here offered to your consideration; and that your *patience* is such, that you will bear the prolixity, and inaccuracies you may find therein; faults, to which *old men* are thought to be very liable; in which they may with a shew of reason expect some indulgence. If you find any thing that may help to satisfy those scruples under which your mind may have been exercised, I shall not be much concerned, though your *candor* and *patience* have been somewhat put in requisition. And I shall now take my leave of you for the present, with those words of the poet, which have been so often repeated.

Vale, vive; si quid novisti rectius istis. Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

I am, sir, with much respect and affection, your christian friend and servant.

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THE UNHAPPY EFFECTS OF INTEMPERANCE.

An extract with some alterations.

"*WHO hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath wounds without a cause? Who hath redness of eyes,* &c." the wise man answers to his own interrogations; "*the drunkards, those that tarry long at the wine.*"

"I have long been a particular observer of the consequences and tendencies of the passions incident to civil society; and among those

which are degrading to the human character, there is no one which assimilates man so much to a beast, as that which prompts to an excessive indulgence in ardent spirits. Deity has elevated man in the scale of being superior to the rest of his works. He has made him capable of aiding the weak, instructing the ignorant, easing the pained, and administering the healing balm to the wounded bosom. Man can pour consolation into the house of mourning, and light up a smile in the cottage of the widow and fatherless. In the formation of the slender vegetable, which he tramples under his feet, and in the organization of his own body, he can clearly discover the hand of an all wise Architect; he can see written on the skies, in legible characters, the power of an omnipotent God; but when an appetite for spirituous liquors is gratified to excess, when the bottle becomes his dearest associate, these distinguished, these noble faculties are perverted, and human natare is reduced to a level with the senseless insect which grovels in the dust."

"When man becomes intoxicated with liquor, every feeling of humanity, every tie of gratitude, and every sense of moral obligation, both to his fellow beings and his God, are dissolved. The tears of the helpless orphan, the groans of suffering innocence, and the mandates of heaven are not sufficient to rouse the wretch from his slumbering lethargy. Can there be a more melancholy, a more horrid spectacle, than a fellow being, who has destroyed, by his intemperance, those faculties and powers, which Deity designed should be exercised toward the advancement of the general good, individual happiness and his own eternal well being? Follow the *debauchee* from his midnight bacchanals to his place of abode, and if you have one spark of humanity, he will shew you a picture, which will draw forth the sympathetic tear; you behold his habitation, *without*, tattered and exhibiting every emblem of poverty *within*, discord and distress." His wife, a virtuous and industrious woman, has been ambitious to appear equal with her industrious neighbors in point of property and outward accommodations. When joined in wedlock, she expected her husband to be her constant companion, to solace her griefs, to hold out the supporting hand, and speak a comforting word in her trouble, and to participate in her joys, while she in return administers the same to him. To him she looked to be the guardian of a rising family, and *an help meet* in providing for them. But how great is her disappointment, when all their earnings must be sacrificed to the gratification of his intemperate appetite! Mortified, discouraged and disheartened, *tears become her daily meat*. Her ears are pierced with the cries of her dear children for bread, or something to satisfy their raging hunger. Naturally timid, when night comes on, being left alone with her helpless children, she trembles every moment. Does she lie down for nature's repose, alas! sleep departs from her. The image of her husband in his midnight bacchanals, exposed to shame and disgrace, spending the money which ought to purchase bread for a hungry family, or increasing debts, which will expose him to the arrests of the officer, is continually before her. And when he arrives, she is not relieved; for he being intoxicated and enraged without provocation, she is the unhappy subject against whom he belches out his awful curses, and on whom, perhaps, he lays his merciless blows. And the most cutting reflection of all is, that he is ruining himself, body and soul forever. In short, he becomes the source of her constant grief. You see his children, "destitute of every ornament both mental and corporeal, except those afforded by nature," learning of their father, shocking

consideration! to curse and swear, and take the name of God in vain.

"Is he a farmer? His fences are demolished and his fields left to the spontaneous productions of nature. Is he a mechanic? His work is superficially finished, his customers disappointed, his stock confiscated, and himself finally reduced to the mercy of the ruthless elements; as with these, so with all other occupations in society."

"Drunkenness brings the king from his throne and reduces him to a level with his meanest subjects. Alexander, who could controul despots and dominions, by his nod, could not withstand the force of "the cup of Hercules." Intemperance could unnerve that arm which had slain its thousands, and terminate a life which, for valiant achievements, can boast a superiority to any on the page of history. Wine was the enemy which tumbled a Dionysius from his throne, impaired his faculties, destroyed his constitution, and finally put a period to his existence."

"A celebrated author says, that ardent spirit is more destructive to the human species, it destroys more lives and property than the sword." "Would you preserve your reputation from the blast of disgrace, would you retain your prosperity, health and life; would you have peace and plenty at home, and respectability abroad; would you arrive to your grave completely ripe for glory, as a shock of corn for the granary? If so, avoid the gaming table, the tavern, and the ale house; abandon, abandon, as you would the deadly poison, the growing, but all destroying practice of intemperate drinking.

SELECT SENTENCES.

FROM WISDOM IN MINIATURE.

"PRACTICAL atheism has always been the grand support of speculative; and is no less dangerous in its tendency and effects.

I can hardly believe that man to be in his right mind, said an heathen, who is destitute of religion.

No men are more afraid of God, than such as pretend not to believe his being.

When a man jests upon religion, or declares it indifferent what religion we are of, it is certain that himself is of no religion at all.

The atheist is the most credulous person in the world, who believes the universe to be the production of chance.

As folly and inconsiderateness are the foundation of infidelity, the great pillars and support of it are, either a vanity of appearing wiser than the rest of mankind, or an ostentation of courage in despising the terrors of another world, which have so great an influence on what they call weaker minds; or an aversion to a belief, which must cut them off from many of those pleasures, they propose to themselves, and fill them with remorse for many of those they have already tasted.

An atheist is the most vain pretender to reason in the world: the whole strength of atheism consists in contradicting the universal reason of mankind. He has no principles, nor can have any; and therefore he can never reason, but only confidently deny and affirm.

If we believe that God is, *and act consonantly*, we shall be safe, if he be not; and eternally happy, if he be; whereas if we believe that he is not, we are sure to be miserable forever, if he be; and are only safe from being miserable forever, if he be not.

'Tis a certain maxim, that such as take themselves out of God's protection are always at a loss, and

know not how to dispose of themselves."

Malice and cruelty naturally pass into suspicion and timidity.

Insolence is near a kin to flattery and fawning. Meanness and haughtiness are allied.

Defiance of heaven is akin to superstition.

The following is an extract from the last leaf of sir William Jones' bible, the first literary character of the last century.

"I have regularly and attentively read these *holy scriptures*; and am of opinion, that this volume, independent of its divine origin, contains more *sublimity* and *beauty*, more *pure morality*, more *important history*, and fine strains of *poetry* and *eloquence*, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been composed.

Mr. Locke, a man of first distinction for penetration and correctness of judgment, observed of the bible; "It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter."

ANECDOTES.

POLYCARP, a primitive bishop and a disciple of St. John, being summoned before a heathen magistrate, and commanded to abjure Jesus Christ, made this noble reply; "fourscore and five years I have been serving Christ, and he hath never done me the least wrong: how then shall I blaspheme my King and my Savior."

COUNT OVENSTURN, chancellor of Sweden and prime minister of the great Gustavus Adolphus, was a person of the first rank and abilities in his own country, and had rendered himself very considerable through Europe. Being visited in his old age by the English Ambassador, he said, "Sir, I have seen and enjoyed much of the world, but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God, who hath given me time to know him and myself. All the comfort I have and can take, (and which is more than the whole world can give me,) is the knowledge of God's love in my heart, and the reading of this blessed book, (laying his hand on the bible) you are now in the prime of your age and vigor, and in great favor and business; but these will all leave you, and you will, one day, better understand and relish what I say to you. Then you will find there is more wisdom, truth, comfort and pleasure in retiring and turning your heart from the world, in the good spirit of God, and in reading his sacred word, than in all the courts and all the favors of princes."

A MAN'S BEING PERSECUTED IS NO PROOF OF HIS PIETY, OR OF THE TRUTH OF THE DOCTRINES HE EMBRACES.

FROM the patience and constancy of the apostles under their accumulated sufferings we derive an impressive proof of the strength of their faith, the ardor of their love, piety and zeal; and also of the truth of the christian religion. Hence some, from the ill treatment, they receive from scoffers, and the opposition to their particular religious opinions from contending sects, infer the truth of their own tenets and their interest in Christ. But this inference may not be just. The situation of christians is now very different from those, who lived in the first ages of christianity. The civil arm, the superstitions and prejudices, as well as the lusts of

men were opposed to and armed against christianity and those who propagated it. The religion of Jesus was every where hated and despised by unconverted Jews and Gentiles. While the apostles faithfully propagated it, however wise and prudent their conduct, they could not escape persecution. In these happier times and in this land of liberty, the civil power is on the side of religion. Men find it for their interest to be thought christians. The rights of conscience are secured. The profession of religion is honorable. Where shall we find the man less esteemed, or evil treated for his piety, faith, charity, well directed zeal, or any other christian grace or virtue? If he sometimes meet with the jeers and scoffs of the thoughtless and profane, it cannot deserve the name of persecution, nor is it a proof of his sincerity or piety. For hypocrites are as often reproached and ridiculed, as real christians. Generally it is not for the doctrines of the gospel, or for their graces and virtues that men are reproached and vilified; but for their errors, imprudencies, censoriousness, and conduct contrary to their profession. And if they suffer for these things, it is not for righteousness sake, and is far from being an evidence that they are real christians.

But if a man be persecuted, even if he suffer martyrdom for his religion it is no certain evidence that he is a *good* man. It proves his faith in it. For it is not to be supposed, any one would rather suffer death, than deny a religion he did not believe, or consider of more importance than life. Such sufferings in its defence discover ardent zeal. He must also be sincere. In this case there can be no motive for hypocrisy. A hypocrite would rather deny, or disguise his religion, than die in its defence. No worldly motives can here have influence; for every worldly advantage would perish with him. But all this does not certainly imply grace in the heart. Saint Paul supposes a man may give his body to be burned, and yet not possess that love, which is essential to the character of a christian.

It was not the severe sufferings of the apostles in the christian cause, which gave those bright evidences of the truth of grace in their hearts; but the temper and disposition, which they exhibited under their trials, and the graces and virtues, which these called into exercise, and which with such resplendent lustre shone around them. The wicked as well as the righteous have borne persecution, but with very different dispositions.

It is no evidence of the truth of doctrines, that men are persecuted for their faith in, or profession of them. It proves only, that the sufferers are sincere and zealous in belief of them and of their importance. Being persecuted generally makes men more tenacious of their opinions, but not less fallible. They may err, and suffer in the cause of error as well as truth. If it would prove a doctrine true, the most heretical, and even infidelity would cease to want their proofs. For these have had their martyrs.

Should it then be asked, what evidence the constancy in sufferings and martyrdom of the apostles are of the truth of the christian religion; it may be replied: They afford the strongest proofs of the sincerity of their faith. And such was their situation, that they could not be deceived respecting those facts, by which the truth of christianity is established beyond a reasonable doubt. They must know whether Jesus Christ wrought miracles, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead; whether they could perform these miracles by a power derived from him, and whether he was crucified, and rose again agreeably to his own prediction. These things were objects of their senses, and so numerous that it is impossible, they could be deceived

respecting them. Their continuing to assert these facts notwithstanding their sufferings in consequence of it, and sealing their testimony with their blood, is an undoubted evidence of their truth; and consequently of the truth of the christian religion.

Let us illustrate this idea by a familiar example. Suppose a man declares he was an eye witness of a certain fact, and such were all the circumstances attending it, that we are satisfied, he could in no way be deceived respecting it. All doubts of its truth, which could possibly arise in our mind, would be of his veracity. Every proof, therefore, of his veracity is a proof to us of the truth of the fact. Should all worldly motives at the same time concur to press him to disown it, and yet, through a long series of cruel persecution he should constantly assert it, and submit to a most painful and ignominious death rather than deny it, we then have the highest proof of his veracity, and could not doubt it, or of the truth of the fact. It is thus with the apostles and primitive martyrs. They declare to us, that they were eye and ear witnesses of certain facts by which the truth of the christian religion is most firmly supported. Such are all the concurring circumstances that they must have had full knowledge of the truth of them. They relinquished the endearments and comforts of the world, and for a series of years submitted to unparalleled sufferings and labors, and finally to painful and ignominious deaths rather than deny them. Here they give undoubted proofs of their veracity, and consequently of the truth of the facts, and by a second consequence the truth of the christian rel igion. The evidence of these things is greatly corroborated by the number of the witnesses, and the harmony of their testimony.

But had their situations been such as to enable them to obtain only probable evidence of the truth of those facts, their sufferings and death in attestation of them, would not strengthen the proofs of the facts themselves, but only show that they believed them. There would be still reason to doubt this probable evidence.

The following Letter was written by Mrs. SARAH GILL, *a daughter of the rev. Mr. Prince, and sealed with this order,* NOT TO BE OPENED TILL AFTER MY DEATH; *and in compliance with her request, it was not,*

To all my young acquaintance into whose hands these lines may come.

AS from the invisible world, that world of spirits, into which mine will have entered before this is presented to you, I now address you; and I earnestly entreat you to receive my message.

I may now say, since I shall be beyond the sensibilities of this mortal life, that it is a disinterested love and concern for your best good, that prompts me to this. With pity have I often thought on your case. Frequently has my heart bled in secret for those of you, who live estranged from God, ignorant of the pleasures of the divine life, unacquainted with the lovely Redeemer, with communion with God, the gracious influences of his spirit, and the tokens of his love and favor. And while I have seen you engaged in a round of amusements and sensual gratifications, the world smiling on you, and you hearkening to its delusive promises, pleasing yourselves with its airy vanities, I have thought you, as you really are, a company of spirits made and bound for eternity, and speedily hastening to it, and uncertain whether you should be happy in the society of perfec-

ted spirits, and in the satisfying presence of God forever, or be miserably fixed in a state of enmity to him, in company with unholy devils. And yet you are diverting on the borders of this eternity, as securely as though you could never enter into it. Let me therefore entreat you, by all the motives proper to sway you, as reasonable, as immortal beings, to secure your eternal welfare without any delay: 'till that is done, you are in constant hazard of eternal death. The next hour may be the finishing, the deciding period. Can you be easy to stand on the brink of *eternity*, ready to fall, and not know how your state will be determined at the awful bar of God? Dare you venture into his presence, whose all seeing eye penetrates the inmost recesses of your hearts and not know whether he is your friend, or your Almighty enemy? Can you think of appearing before him as a Judge, and rest 'till you have secured him as your Savior? Are your souls precious? Do you really see their importance? If you do not, go visit a dying bed, see what that will teach you; read the word of God, and there you will find the maker of your souls tells you, that they are of more worth than a *whole world*. But this is not all: consider the value Christ set on them. To save souls, the eternal Word condescended to veil his glory, to take on him the form of a servant, and in that form to suffer and die. Read the history of his life, his humble state, his hardships and indignities, his painful, ignominious death, the agonies of his soul, his bearing the wrath of God, suffering under the immense weight of the divine displeasure. Read his agony in the garden, and on the cross, and all loudly speak the worth of each of your immortal souls.

Would you be happy in life, ? The ways of vital godliness are indeed pleasant, and the keeping of God's commandments brings a peace passing understanding! Would you be fitted to meet death without terror? Come to Christ and he will take away the sting of it, and it shall be to you a sweet passage way to glory! Would you be safe for eternity? An interest in Christ will give you such a sure title to eternal life, as nothing can annul! What pleas shall I use to persuade you to be religious? Shall I tell you, *your all* depends upon it; that this is the only way to glorify God, and that you cannot be happy here, or hereafter without it? Shall I allure or terrify you? Shall I tell you of heaven with all its joys, that God *himself* must be yours, or you must have hell, with all its amazing terrors, the guilt of sin, the stings of conscience, the wrath of an incensed God, and a slighted Savior, for your miserable portion to eternity! Can you think of the contrast, and hesitate a moment which to choose! I speak as from eternity; wont you believe me? Shall I allure you by the grace of the gospel? Shall I tell you of the amiableness, the transcendent loveliness of the blessed Mediator; that he is altogether glorious in his person and mediatorial character; that he is all sufficient to save you. Shall I assure you he is now *willing* to do it, offers himself with all his benefits to you, and waits your acceptance. If you will accept him, he will be your Almighty friend, your satisfying portion, your prevalent intercessor, and he will be all this, *forever*. You shall be filled with love, joy and peace, shall see such glories, and feel such happiness, as is beyond the conception of the most raised mind on earth! This is something of the bliss Christ now offers you! And what answer will you now give him? Will you accept or refuse? One or the other you must do. Do you begin to consider? And are you ready to ask, "what methods shall I use to get into the narrow path, which leads to life?" It is no doubt your indispensable duty immediately to repent and believe the gospel; and although none but God can give you this repentance and faith, yet, as

he usually works through the instrumentality of means, as the most probable method to obtain them, take time for serious meditation; let not one day pass without diligently attending all the means of grace, public, private and secret. Be much in secret prayer, hear every sermon as for your life, and as though it was the last; labor to keep eternity in view; labor to realize the eye of God always on you; these are powerful incentives to diligence. Associate with the fearers of God. Seek for proper companions to whom you may open your cases, and do not be afraid or ashamed to do it. O do not be ashamed to appear openly or singularly good; bear on your minds that you cannot get to heaven without pains, arduous labors, and persevering strivings. Religion is not the work of a day, nor is it a thing to come in by the bye, but is the one thing necessary, and must be the chief business of your lives; you must give God your whole hearts. Do not think you can serve God and sin together, but remember that real religion is a conformity of soul to God in moral dispositions, and therefore that sin must be forsaken. You must turn from *all sin*, or you will never turn to God. Resolve in humble dependence on the help of Christ, to delay no longer, but immediately to set about this great work in earnest.

FOR THE MAGAZINE.

THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL.

"*Thy Kingdom Come,*"

IF we have a real affection for Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, and a hearty desire to promote his honor and interest in the world, we shall readily adopt this petition, in that excellent form of prayer, which he gave his disciples. Some indeed have supposed that the Lord's prayer cannot with propriety be used by Christians, in this age of the world, because his kingdom is already established. This will always be a proper object of prayer, so long as there are any of the human race unacquainted with the gospel of the Son of God, or any who, while they have the form of godliness, deny the power, and are not in sincerity and truth the real subjects of Christ's kingdom. All who are thoroughly acquainted with the religion of Jesus, and have felt its transforming influence on their own hearts, must ardently wish that the cheering beams of the Sun of Righteousness might visit those nations which are now sitting in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death. To see creatures endowed with intellectual and moral powers, perishing for lack of vision, must be very affecting to a benevolent mind. It has often been pretended, that the light of reason is sufficient to guide mankind to virtue and happiness. It will be extremely difficult to adopt this sentiment, if we consider the deplorable ignorance, the gross superstition and idolatry, which universally prevailed among the heathen nations, before the coming of Christ, and which still prevail among the modern nations which have not received the gospel. All the boasted philosophy of Greece and Rome was totally insufficient to lead men to the knowledge of the true God, and their duty to him. Their best systems of morality were extremely defective, and were never enforced by motives sufficient to influence the minds of men. We find some of the wisest among them, plainly intimating the necessity of a divine teacher. You may give over, says one, all hopes of reforming men's manners, unless God shall be pleased to send some other person to instruct you; for says another, nothing can be set right in the present system of

things, but by the interposition of the Deity himself. The erection of the kingdom of God in the world, under the administration of his Son was therefore a most incomparable blessing to mankind; and we have abundant reason to hope that this shall finally prevail among all the nations of the earth. By the *kingdom of God* in scripture, is sometimes intended his universal dominion and government over all intelligent creatures. Thine is the kingdom, says David, and thou art exalted as head above all. The kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the governor among the nations. It is not supposeable that Christ directed his apostles to pray for the advancement of this general government of the Deity over intelligent creatures. For this has ever been, and always will be invariably the same. This kingdom is from *everlasting* to *everlasting*, without limits or interruption; it is alike in all places, and at all times, and never can come, at one time more than another. But though we cannot pray that the kingdom of God, in that sense, may come, yet it ought to be matter of praise and rejoicing, to all rational and immortal beings, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. That the government of the world is in the hands of a being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, must afford joy and delight to all serious, attentive minds. By this phrase, *thy kingdom come*, is specially intended the *gospel kingdom*, or that gracious constitution, which the father has been pleased to appoint, through the mediation of his Son. After man had revolted from his Maker by the violation of that precept, which was the test of his obedience, God was pleased in his infinite wisdom and goodness to promise a Savior, who should eventually remove those evils which sin had introduced. The whole Jewish economy was designed to pave the way for setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world. The prophet Daniel plainly refers to the gospel dispensation when he says, after these days (after the Babylonian and Medo Persian monarchies were destroyed, and the Grecian was split in pieces) the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, (which he did under the fourth Monarchy) which was the Roman) and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. This is the gospel state; or the establishment of true religion in the world by Jesus Christ, to whom the father hath committed all power in heaven and earth, and made to be head over all things to the church. This is that kingdom which our Lord assures the Jews, cometh not with observation, but was already among them, and which if a man did not receive as a little child, he could in no wise enter therein, which in the language of the apostle does not consist of meat and drink, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. When our Lord exhorts his disciples to pray that the *kingdom of God might come*, the meaning is, that the gospel might have a more extensive spread, be more fully believed, and have a more powerful influence, upon the hearts and lives of men. They were to pray that agreably to the language of prophecy, God would give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts for his possession. There was a peculiar propriety in adopting this petition, when the gospel was first published to the world, for all the powers of earth and hell seemed to be combined to prevent the erection of this glorious kingdom in the world. There was no human probability that a religion so opposite to the lusts, prejudices, and temporal interests of men, would ever prevail, without some remarkable display of divine pow-

er. This religion, under the greatest apparent disadvantages, had in a few years a remarkable spread, and was carried into all parts of the Roman empire. Converts came flying from all quarters, as a cloud, and as doves to their windows. The rapidity of its propagation is almost beyond conception. It is fitly compared by our Lord himself to lightning. *As the lightning, says he, cometh out of the one part under heaven, and shineth to another part under heaven, so shall also the son of man be in his day.* Before the destruction of Jerusalem, which was less than forty years after our Lord's crucifixion, the gospel was to be published among all nations, meaning probably all who were subject to the Roman yoke. Some of the earliest fathers of the church, mention several countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe, which were never subdued by the Romans, among whom the gospel was early received. But notwithstanding this remarkable success of the gospel, there are many nations now in the world, who are involved in all the darkness and idolatry of paganism. If the light of the glorious gospel *ever* shone upon them, it has long since been totally eclipsed, and they now pay their adorations to such as are by nature no gods, and worship the creature instead of the glorious Creator. Multitudes in the world have embraced the Mahometan imposture, a system which though in some respects it resembles christianity, is yet a gross departure from it. Among those nations which are called christian, many have apostatized from the faith once delivered to the saints. So many superstitions and idolatrous rites have been introduced, such a variety of human traditions and inventions interwoven with it, that its glory and lustre have been in a great measure tarnished. That antichristian persecuting power, which was the subject of antient prophecy, and for several centuries was at the saints of the Most High, has however been on the decline, ever since the reformation, and its total overthrow is advancing. I might also mention the case of the Jews who amidst their dispersion through all the kingdoms of the world, retain their infidelity, and are vainly looking for the coming of the Messiah. Among those who enjoy the gospel in its purity, how few comparatively imbibe its genuine spirit, and live agreeably to its dictates! Under these circumstances how fit and proper is it that we should pray that *the kingdom of God may come*, that Christ might become King of nations, as he is King of Saints?

ALONZO.

For the Magazine.

REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST DAY.

THAT this earth, with all things in it, will be destroyed by fire, is clearly revealed in the sacred word. I am sensible that this great and solemn truth is, with many, a subject of ridicule and derision. But the scriptures must be fulfilled. "*There shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying where is the promise of his coming; for* SAVE *that the fathers have fallen asleep, all things continue as they were from the foundation of the world. This, says the inspired apostle, they are willingly ignorant of, that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water.* Their ignorance is affected, rather than real, for they must be sensible, that universal nature is at God's sovereign disposal, and that he can as easily destroy the present form and modification of things, as he formerly

destroyed the old world, by a general deluge. By a careful attention to this instance of divine justice, they may easily be led to conclude, that God will put in execution the threatenings, which he has denounced against the ungodly, and reward his faithful servants. Philosophers and poets have employed all their powers of argument and imagination, to account for the manner, and describe the process of this great event, the conflagration of the world, the conclusion of time. Some have supposed, that a comet in some future period, may approach so near the earth, as to set it on fire. Mr. Whiston, conjectures, that the comet seen in the year 1680, (which by its near approach to the earth, greatly alarmed the inhabitants) may be the executioner of the divine vengeance in some of its revolutions. But if it be possible, to calculate this period by astronomical observations, it seems inconsistent with the words of Christ; but of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. The apostle Peter describes the certainty and solemnity of this great event, in a style far superior to that of all the philosophers in the world. But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away, with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth and all things that are therein, shall be burnt up. The apostle asserts the truth and certainty of the coming of the day of the Lord. I would not wish to enter into a formal proof of this point at present. All who believe the new testament, must assent to it as a truth, most amply attested. Indeed reason itself dictates, that the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness, will finally render to all, according to their ways, and according to the fruit of their doings. The history of all nations and all ages informs us, that they have believed a future state of recompences, though they have mingled many weak and absurd particulars with this general truth. While men believe the perfections and moral government of God, and at the same time notice the events that take place in this world, they must conclude that there will be a future reckoning, when the cause of truth and righteousness shall be completely vindicated. The voice of conscience, that faithful monitor, which is implanted in the breast of every man, plainly forebodes a future period, *when* every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing. We are however indebted to DIVINE REVELATION, for the fullest and most satisfactory proof of this important truth. This alone informs us of the manner and circumstances of it, and of the person by whom the world is to be judged. We may notice the uncertainty of the time when our Lord will come to judgment. It may be proper to observe, that the coming of our Lord is compared to the approach of a thief, merely on account of its being a sudden, unexpected event. It would be absurd and impious to argue from hence, that fraud and injustice will accompany the procedure. It may be remarked, with regard to parables and metaphors in general, that some particular idea is commonly suggested which is plain and obvious, with which we ought to rest satisfied, without attempting to build doctrines on minute circumstances, which do not respect the main design. As a thief approacheth at a time when men are most thoughtless and secure, so will be the coming of Christ to judgment. The time and season of this important transaction, God has seen fit to reserve in his own power. We may notice the solemn and important circumstances, which shall attend the coming of Christ to judgment, and usher in the *last day*. *The heavens shall pass away with a great*

noise. The inspired apostle doubtless means the visible heavens, consisting of the sun, moon, and stars. Those huge bodies, which ever since the creation, have performed their stated revolutions about their common centre, must be plucked from their orbits, and involved in one common ruin. The sun, that glorious luminary, which by his light and heat, has for so many ages cheered the whole system, must be involved in darkness; and the moon and stars will no more give their light ; the earth which was given to the children of men, must be consumed. The laws of the planetary system will then be suspended, and the whole mass of matter which constitutes it, share in the general conflagration. To adopt the striking language of Dr. Young ;

"This globe alone, would but defraud the fire,
Starve its devouring rage, the flakes aspire,
And catch the clouds, and make the heavens their prey ;
The sun, and moon, and stars all melt away,
All, all is lost, no monument or sign,
Where once so proudly blaz'd the gay machine.
So bubbles on the forming stream expire,
So sparks that scatter from the kindling fire ;
The devasations of one dreadful hour,
The great Creator's six days work devour,
A mighty, mighty ruin."

The scriptures speak of the general conflagration, the resurrection of the dead, and the last day, as events nearly connected ; 'tis represented as the last solemn scene ; which shall be introductory to new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The ocean will then evaporate in air, like a drop of water thrown on heated iron. All the dust of man, that had been scattered from the creation to the dissolution of the world, shall then be gathered. The dust of the martyrs shall be recalled from the four winds of heaven. shall be refined and purified. Then the sea must give up her dead, all that have lain down in a watery grave ; all that have been devoured by the monsters of the deep shall be wakeful to the trump of God, which rends the vaulted sky, shakes the solid globe and cleaves the tombs. Then *bone shall come to its bone*, and dry bones be raised to life and vigor. All the living will then be changed ; and all the dead be made alive. Marvel not at this, for all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth. Our burial grounds will then be thronged with living men, suddenly bursting from the silent dormitories of the dead, from the long confinement of the grave. Then the righteous shall be caught up in the air to meet their Lord, and take refuge in his arms. But O! what consternation, terror and amazement, must fill the wicked and unbelieving ; when they see heaven and earth in flames ; time and the world passing away ; eternity approaching, and judgment at hand. In vain will you call to the rocks and mountains to fall upon you, to shelter you, alarmed and terrified, from the presence of the judge of *quick and dead!* How then can the boldest infidel think it a thing impossible that God should raise the dead ? or how can he expect to escape the judgment of God ? Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which was spoken by the prophets ; behold ye despisers and wonder and perish ; for I work a work in your days which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

ALONZO.

A late publication, styled

The Age of Revelation, or, The Age of Reason,

shewn to be *an Age of Infidelity*, by ELIAS BOUDINOT, LL. D. and Director of the Mint of the United States,

Is most affectionately dedicated to his daughter,

Mrs. SUSAN V. BRADFORD,

Widow and relict of *William Bradford*, esq. late Attorney General of the United States.

The following excellent recommendation of the Holy Scriptures is extracted from the dedication.

OF the Holy Scriptures he says, "It is by their instructions, that, in the language of the elegant Hunter, the true christian learns," "what is the commanding object in the eye of eternal Providence, the salvation of a lost world, by Jesus Christ. Do you adopt the same object? Cleave unto it; keep it continually in view; all things else are vain and worthless; for they are passing quickly away. Our interest in, and hold of the world, is diminishing every hour. Our consequence as candidates for immortal bliss, as heirs of glory, is rising in proportion. When we cease from importance, as the citizens of this world, our real importance begins to be felt and understood. I recommend no sullen distance from your fellow creatures, nor peevish discontent. Live in the world. Associate with mankind. Enjoy the portion, which God allotteth to you, but use the world, so as not to abuse it. While you are encumbered about many things, never forget, that one thing is needful, and choose that good part, which shall not be taken from you."*

The experience of forty years and upwards, has confirmed the conclusions I have drawn from the doctrines of the gospel; and be assured, my dear child, that this † author's whole work is made up of old objections, answered, and that conclusively, a thousand times over, by the advocates for our holy religion. Some of them he has endeavored to clothe with new language, and put into a more ridiculous form; but many of them he has collected almost word for word from the writings of the deists of the last and present century.

May that God, who delighteth in the meek and humble temper, which trembleth at his word, lead you to the cross of Christ; and there by his holy spirit direct you into all truth. May he instruct you in his holy word, which is able to make you wise unto salvation. Let that word abide in you richly become your daily companion under every circumstance of life: "the man of your council, a lamp to your paths, and a light to your feet."

For near half a century, have I anxiously and critically studied that invaluable treasure, and I still scarcely ever take it up, that I do not find something new, that I do not receive some valuable addition to my stock of knowledge, or perceive some instructive fact, never observed before. In short, were you to ask me to recommend the most valuable book in the world, I should fix on the bible as the most instructive, both to the wise and ignorant. Were you to ask me for one, affording the most rational and pleasing entertainment to the inquiring mind, I should repeat, it is the bible; and should you renew the inquiry, for the best philosophy, or the most interesting history, I should still urge you to look into your bible. I would make it, in short, the Al-

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* Hunters sacred Biography 2d volume, 24.

† Meaning the author of the Age of Reason.

pha and Omega of knowledge; and be assured, that it is for want of understanding the scriptures, both of the old and new testament, that so little value is set upon them by the world at large. The time, however, is not far off, when they will command a very different reception among the sons of men.

One thing I beg you would attend to, as a guard against the designs of infidels, to wit, that the gospel revelation is a complete system of salvation, suited to our fallen nature, and should be taken altogether. Be cautious, then, how you ever hearken to objections levelled against detached principles, separated from the system, which are too often made use of, with success, by those who wish to weaken the force of revelation upon the mind of its professors, and by slow, if not imperceptible advances, to sap the foundation of their hope. It is not unusual to hear the punishment of sin, stated as incompatible with the perfections and attributes of Almighty God; that he cannot delight in the sufferings of the creatures that he has made, as he has no passions to gratify, and he delighteth not in cruelty. But the gospel reveals the great Jehovah, as the governor of all ranks of being in the universe.

That it is necessary to keep all intelligences in the love of order, and obedience to his righteous laws. That the breach of them, necessarily induces a separation from him, who is the fountain and source of all happiness and enjoyment; and, of course, necessarily induces misery in the extreme. This becomes a warning to all intelligences, to avoid the evil of sin; and therefore it is for the good of the whole, and founded in benevolence to beings in general, that the obstinate and unbelieving sinner is punished. But if the advocate for infidelity can once weaken your faith, by the disbelief of future punishment, he finds you then ready for a new attack, by the denial of some other detached principle, till thus by degrees, your faith is undermined and destroyed before you are aware of it.

For you I have written. To you I commit this labor of my old age, hoping that, as it is designed for your own private instruction, you will receive it, as in the fear of the Lord, without a critising eye, or opposing heart; and that you will be persuaded by it, to search the scriptures, "knowing that they contain the words of eternal life," thereby you will gratify the most fervent desire of

An *Affectionate Parent.*

ADDISON'S VIEW OF MAN.

IN this system of being, there is no creature so wonderful in its nature, and which so much deserves our particular attention, *as man*, who fills up the middle space between the animal and intellectual nature, the visible and invisible world; and is that link in the chain of beings, which has been often termed the *nexus utriusque mundi*. So that he who, in one respect, is associated with angels and archangels, and may look upon a Being of infinite perfection as his *Father*, and the highest order of beings as his *brethren*, may, in another respect say to corruption, *thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my sister and mother!*

OBITUARY NOTICES.

DIED at Moheagan, in Connecticut, MARTHA, widow of Zechariah, one of the chiefs of the Moheagan tribe, at the uncommon age of 120. She was for many years an agent from this tribe to the general assembly of Connecticut.

The Moheagan tribe consists at present, of about 38 families, which comprise upwards of eighty individuals, who, notwithstanding handsome advantages for improvement, are distinguished by the characteristic* indolence, intemperance, and improvidence of Indians.

Last winter, departed this life at Massapee, in the county of Barnstable, SAMUEL RICHARDS, aged 91. He was the oldest indian in the tribe; but was remarkably upright. He was tall and well proportioned. He had been early taught to read his vernacular tongue, and was the last in the plantation who owned an Eliot's Bible; the remains of which the compiler of this article purchased two or three years ago. At that time he placed but little value on it, as his sight was impaired. He had been a professor of the christian religion for many years, and was considered as a steady, temperate, honest, well-minded Indian. He and his squaw used to converse together in their native tongue; but there is scarcely a family left, in Massapee, which knows much about the Indian language, although the remains of the tribe are supposed to be as numerous as those of Moheagan.

Of late years, these aboriginal descendants have seemed to pride themselves on an ignorance of the language of their fathers. Although their general character is not widely different from that of the Moheagans; yet it is worthy of remark, that some of our best seamen, particularly for whaling, have proceeded from Massapee. O.

*See 9 vol. Mass. Hist. Coll.

Died in Hartford, Connecticut, November 1803, Mrs. Sarah Hale, late of Coventry, and relict of John Hale Esqr. she was exercised with a long and distressing illness and greatly afflicted with the loss of her affectionate and excellent husband not one year before; which distress and affliction she bore with christian patience, fortitude, and submission. In this time of trial she enjoyed the support and some of the blessed fruits of the holy religion, which she had long before professed, and with the virtues and graces of which she had adorned her life. Solicitous to promote the cause of christianity by devoting a part of the estate left by her benevolent and pious husband to its support and defence, and wishing to honor his memory, she bequeathed in her will one THOUSAND POUNDS lawful money to several trustees for the following pious purposes. After adding one sixth part of the income to the principal to increase the fund, the remainder of the income, for the two first years, is appropriated to begin a library suitable for the education of missionaries and candidates for the gospel ministry, which library is to be kept in Coventry, the native place and residence of her late husband, and is for the use of christian ministers of all denominations in Coventry and adjacent towns, but especially for young gentlemen preparing themselves for the gospel ministry. After the two first years, one tenth of the income is appropriated for the increase of the library, and the remainder for the support and instruction of young men preparing for the ministry. It is hoped this generous donation will greatly serve the interest of christianity.

H. P.

The Editors remark, that this provision is peculiarly seasonable. Infidelity has become bold, and men of talents will probably make their attacks on our holy religion. It is therefore more than ever necessary, that the ministers of the gos-

pel be defenders of the faith. The libraries of ministers are necessarily small from the inadequate income, which they have. Many young men, having spent their patrimony in their previous education, are induced to hurry into the ministry and are unable to lay that broad foundation, on which they can become learned divines, or able and ready with advantage to meet the adversaries of the gospel. This excellent woman has hit upon a method of doing extensive good. The library, if well chosen, will tend to promote a critical knowledge of the sacred scriptures, and furnish the best defence against the attacks of infidels. It would be of great utility to the church, were a well chosen library placed in every parish for the use of the ministry. Ministers would have more inducement to study, and their lips would retain and teach knowledge. The income of a small sum in a number of years would procure a useful library, and future generations would bless the donor.

The better education of missionaries and candidates is greatly desirable and important. The means of knowledge in general have been increasing. The advantages of our religious instructions ought to be increased, lest they fall into contempt, and through their indiscretion, ignorance and incapacity to teach and defend its blessed truths, reproach be cast upon our holy religion. May this example of well directed generosity induce others to do likewise. *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.*

Departed this life, at Portsmouth, 3d January, MARY ANN BECK, in her eighth year, the only child of Captain Michael Beck. On 20 of March, ALEXANDER LAING LAIGHTON, aged two years and seven months, son of Captain Luke Mills Laighton; and, 9th. May, William Laighton, aged fifteen months, second son of Mr. William Laighton.

"The dear delights we here enjoy,
"And fondly call our own,
"Are but short favors borrow'd now,
"To be repaid anon." O.

On Thursday, the 11th of April, left this world the honorable JOHN PICKERING, esquire, LL. D. in the 68 year of his age. He was a member of several literary and humane societies, and filled with dignity and fidelity various civil offices of honor and trust. For six or eight years prior to his death, being a great part of that time under a mental derangement, his eminent abilities were lost to the world. He was modest and amiable in youth, and in maturity of years an exemplary professor of the christian religion.

It is a satisfaction, that, during his long and humiliating deprivation of reason, he had some lucid intervals, when the clouds of thick darkness were so far removed as to disclose some traces of the former excellence of his understanding, and of his delight in acts of devotion. He seemed an emblem of Tadmor in the desert, of antient fame, *noble even in ruins.*

O.